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MEDIASCENE

MARCH/APRIL 8

STERANKO'S "HOW I PAINT THE SHADOW"
ORIGINS OF THE GREAT PULP HEROES
HITCHCOCK'S FAMILY PLOT
SHADOW OF THE COMICS
THE 50 RAREST PULPS
WHO IS CHANDLER?

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A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

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january—february
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MEDIASCENE is a bi-monthly publication devoted to popular culture in multimedia, from the comics to the cinema.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: single issue $1.50 year $7.50
published by supergraphics box 440/wyomissing pa/19610

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second class postage paid at reading pa

MEDIASCENE

MEDIASCENE is now in its fourth year of publication!

There were times when it seemed like forty years. Nevertheless, the moment we conceived the idea for this publication and created its name (it was COMIXSCENE then) often seems like only yesterday. Time does have a healing effect, even on the pain of producing a magazine with the style and verve that goes into each issue—and, take it from us, those two items require a considerable amount of blood, sweat and tears.

One of the things that most concern an editor of a magazine is his ability to improve the product, to continue to top himself issue after issue. It can be a frustrating experience, especially after working long and hard hours to put a publication to bed, then realize that the next edition has to be even better. It can be fulfilling, too, when the following issue is completed—and turns out to be a superior product.

We set that same goal for every issue—to top the previous one. The success of a publication depends on its readers, of course, and, using that measure, our last issue is our most successful yet. MEDIASCENE 17 was almost a complete sell-out.

Now, we're about to do it all over again.

Last time, we promised an all-pulp spectacular headlining fast fiction's ace crime-smasher, The Shadow. As you can see, we meant every word of it. Beginning with a cover portrait of the master manhunter delivering a mocking challenge to the lords of the underworld, right through to the very last page, this issue is packed solid with the kind of entertainment MEDIASCENE readers demand.

One question that's been asked over and over again is an explanation of our working techniques: how do you start, what kind of paint do you use, how long does it take to complete a painting, what size is the original done in, do you use reference material, where do you get your ideas from?

All these questions and more are answered in this issue's lead feature *How I Paint The Shadow*. Though we've taught drawing and writing classes in the past, we've never actually produced a lengthy personal account on how it's all accomplished until this issue. Each stage of the painting is detailed and illustrated with a series of photos shot as the art progressed. In addition, a number of the original idea sketches (which otherwise would probably never be seen) are also included in the layout.

Alfred Hitchcock's just completed a new fright film—and you'll discover what it's all about in the pages that follow. *Family Plot* is the master of the macabre's 53rd feature—and was almost his final offering, due to a heart attack he suffered during the shooting of the film. Hitchcock became a public personality with his roguish tongue-in-cheek introductions to his weekly TV thriller show. Readers will find several photos from our Hitchcock preview evocative of those moments.

Hardly a week has gone by that we don't get a few letters or calls reminding us of the fact that it's been almost five years since our last attempt at visual storytelling (*Frogs* excluded). "Are you ever planning to get back into comics again," the phrase goes. I prefer to think I never stopped doing them—that I just take a long time between jobs!

Actually, I'm just as interested now, and possibly even more so, in the art of the pictorial narrative. But, as I've stated previously in this column, there are a number of equally interesting projects which I feel deserve my attention. Considering all these things, I've decided to tackle the job of creating a new visual novel, one which I believe will stir up a storm of controversy among those who have been interested enough in asking that much-repeated question.

By controversy, I am referring to the subject matter, the format and the style in which the book will be done. That subject matter, the detective story, has defied finding it's place in the comic medium. If the cinema can have its *Maltese Falcon*, why not comics? Perhaps this book will help define that place.

The novel will be released this Summer by Pyramid Books and will be produced through Byron Preiss Visual Publications in the new Fiction Illustrated format. That format takes the shape of a digest-sized volume about 120 pages long, each in full-color. Because of the nature of the book and the market to which it will sell, I felt that a new and different internal form must be developed, in addition to using an actual rendering style apart from the comics' typical linear approach.

The solution of both format and style should prove to be an exciting one. Whether it will actually bridge the gap between the comic book structure and an "adult" form remains to be seen. You'll be the judge, of course.

Besides the digest-sized edition, Pyramid has decided to release the book simultaneously in a deluxe edition, a large over-sized volume on heavy quality paper. And there will be full-color posters to herald the event.

How did it all come about? What does the character look like? How about the story? All these questions and several others are answered in this issue following the color centerspread of *Chandler*. Let us know what you think of the project.

More pulp action is on tap in the next feature, *The 50 Rarest Pulps*. We've been planning this layout for quite some time and can think of no better home for it than in this special issue. The books assembled here have been gathered through the cooperation of the top collectors in the country—and have never been seen together previously. Hope you find it as interesting to experience as we did getting it all together.

Film and TV news follows, along with a special feature beginning this issue. MEDIASCENE contributor, Eric Van Lustbader, offers the first of a regular column of in-depth film reviews selected with our readers in mind.

The Shadow strikes again—in a repeat appearance on our second section cover. The art, by the late Bob Powell, precedes a definitive article on *The Shadow in the Comics*, much of which was adapted from material researched and prepared for Volume 3 of *The History of Comics*. You'll find a dossier full of never before revealed facts about The Shadow's comic adventures, along with an update of cover reproductions from my personal collection.

While we're on the subject, Walter Gibson called to say the next three Shadow paperbacks due for release from Pyramid have been selected. *The Queen of Death*, *Grey Fist* and *Green Eyes* are scheduled to appear in the months ahead. The Shadow knows—now you do too!

Part two of *Behind the Mask*, a feature which traces the origins of the great pulp heroes, also lurks somewhere within these pages. John Dinan, a good friend and collaborator on this article, promises a series of pulp features based on his extensive knowledge of the subject. Ready anytime you are, John!

This issue's Comixscene is spilling over with news to the extent where we had to add an additional page to hold it all. As a bonus, we're also adding a new column by one of our old (and one of our favorite) writers, Bruce Dickson. You'll find his analysis of comics and their creators in every issue of MEDIASCENE. It's a pleasure to welcome him to these pages.

Our next issue is really different, something we (nor any other magazine we know of) has ever done before. Take a chance, you'll be surprised—and have something special to add to your comics collection.

Till then, take care ●

STERANKO

$4.00 SUBSCRIBERS NOTE: THIS ISSUE COUNTS AS TWO!

MEDIASCENE BACK ISSUES

No. 1 — Power packed premiere issue on DOC SAVAGE, illustrated versions of Doc by Mike Ploog, Dave Cockrum, Don Newton, Norm Saunders and Steranko. Big Doc Savage article spotlights the Man of Bronze. Rare and obscure, crapped art by pulp and comic reproductions. Full page Steranko presentation piece by Steranko.

No. 2 — Special CAPTAIN MARVEL issue, featuring the story behind Beck's reunion with the Big Red Cheese, illustrated with photos of artists and writers from the 40's and the 70's. Beck's Big Red Marvel engages, along with articles on the Spider pulps, Grapp underground comix and an offbeat and entertaining centerspread by Steranko.

No. 3 — Hauntup HORROR ISSUE! rated. From EC to the Marvel black and whites to the undergrounds, all showcased and dissected in a gallery like article, illustrated with dozens of vintage horror comic covers. "Frogi," the swallow, innovative graphics story by Steranko, appears in the centerspread. Pictorial tributes to Horror Pulps.

No. 4 — DRUGS AND THE COMICS is the theme of this special issue that examines the role of comics and drug usage. The controversial 8-page anti-drug story "The Black," by Steranko highlights this issue, along with the story behind its creation. Plus more news, articles, features, and behind-the-scenes editorial by Steranko.

No. 5 — Special SWORD AND SORCERY issue. Giant double issue featuring epics, articles and art. Never before published illustrations by Marazita de la Fuente Smith, Robert, Kirby, Steranko and others. Definitive articles on Kurtzman and Howard. The Evolution of S&S and Barbarism in the Comics, and more on the heroic fantasy field.

No. 6 — Big BURROUGHS issue, full of action-packed facts and graphics. An article on Burroughs of the Pulps is featured along with great centerspread poster-map of Barsoom. John Carter's long and fantastic career is recapped with rare pulp illustrations. Comic strips, paperback reviews, films, records and media fill out the package.

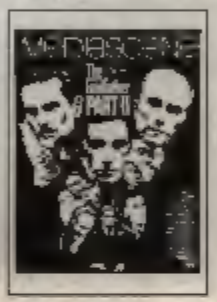
No. 7 — Colorful CRIME AND VIOLENCE issue, from Public Enemy to Magnum Force. Featuring Steranko essay and centerspread paintings. Interview with Executioner author Don Pendleton, writing for crime thrillers by Max Collins and Clint Eastwood profile. Expanded news in Sci-fi and comics to go with film change to MediaScene.

No. 8 — Pavilion PIN-UP issue, packed with a special graphic history of pin-up art from comics to calendars to cheese. A Steranko tribute to Marilyn Monroe graces the centerspread, along with pin-ups from the past. Larger comics, Sci-Fi and movie news are heavily illustrated with exciting graphics in a new, redesigned format.

No. 9 — Amazing All-HERO issue, featuring a photo-packed layout on the filming of Doc Savage, interview with Bantam director John Boorman, full-page map of Tarzan's Africa, Steranko centerspread of his battle-torn hero. Pulps, Comix, Mags, TV and paperback news about Conan, Flash Gordon, others fill out this heroic issue.

No. 10 — SCIENCE FICTION Spectacular illustrated by Williamson, Wood, Kirby, Steranko, more. Giant double-issue packed with art and graphics, fantastic 6-million Dollar Man centerspread in color. EC's SF comics reprinted, Planet of the Apes, SF on TV, The Great SF Illustrators, Incredible Pulps, comics, films. A galactic blockbuster!

No. 11 Solo ADVENTURE issue featuring Hollywood's disaster films, The Return of The Pulp Heroes Showcase, Savage, Soldier's Pictorial Profile on Charles Bronson, Planet Pulps, Behind the Scenes at the National Lampoon. New, large 32-page format, expanded news sections, more 4-color plus super-sized Sword and Sorcery centerspread.



No. 12 — Big Film issue. Special Preview of Godfather II, Doc Savage in Gold, others, Pictorial of James Bond in Man With the Golden Gun, The Mistress of Mystery, Agatha Christie and her film Murder On The Orient Express; new movie pix of Lenny Bruce; The Conplant in Film and Fiction, colorful centerspread poster; art covers this.

No. 13 — All ACTION issue, packed with photo coverage of the Great Waldo Pepper Phenom of the Parallax, and The Legend of Billy Jack, Special feature on The Return of Sherlock Holmes with latest entertainment poster in color. Photo feature on the new Pulps, plus comic news, paperbacks, more media news. SF, fantasy, adventure.

No. 14 — Powerful All-PULP issue, featuring the most fantastic heroes in fiction. The Secrets Behind The Shadow written by his creator, Walter Gibson; Spectacular color-filled centerspread introducing the Doc Savage and Shadow fan clubs; in-depth feature on the Origins of Pulp Heroes. Preview of Tarzan, Elgar Sampler, more.

No. 15 — Double-sized COMICS issue. Vaughn Bode's startling self-portrait in words and pictures, his best circulation work, a penetrating look at Basil Wolverton, special feature on Jack Kirby's return to Marvel with exclusive Bi-centennial pin-up of Cap America. The Art of Neal Adams with a full-page Tarzan.

No. 16 — Special ARTISTS issue. The full story behind the Gil Kane, Ditko and Corben graphic novels; Master of the Macabre, Berni Wrightson reveals his influences and aspirations in a candid interview; First Tribute to Vaughn Bode with an unpublished portrait by Vincent Bede; others feature on Royal Mail, an annotated catalogue on comics, movies.

No. 17 — Dynamite ART issue, featuring The Killer Skies, a look at the flying knights of WWI in comics, pulps and films, with a color Steranko centerspread. Edgar Rice Burroughs centennial portfolio by Frank Frazetta; the Cases Against Superman by Jerry Siegel, preview of Lupin's Run comics, films, more.

No. 18 — Panoramic PULP issue spotlighting The 50 Finest Pulps with cover reproductions; How I Paint The Shadow by Steranko illustrated with previously unpublished art; Behind The Mask, origins of the great Pulp Heroes; The Shadow of the Comics; introducing Chandler, an exciting, new visual novel; more.

THE steranko ENCYCLOPEDIA of SUPERHEROES

To those of you who have an quired about the progress of our forthcoming publication, **THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SUPER HEROES**: All orders which have been received by us to date have been processed for mailing when the Encyclopedias are finally completed. We realize that the books are long overdue, but beauty takes time to create. We guarantee you'll find them well worth the wait—and that their quality will equal our other publications in style, design, and perfection.

STERANKO: HOW I PAINT THE SHADOW

One of the interesting aspects of being a commercial artist is in the fantastic things that happen in the course of events.

The Shadow was one of those things.

Now, my affinity for the pulp era and its product has never been a well kept secret, and during my career as a paperback cover artist I've painted my share of that type of material. Maybe more than my share!

I sold my first painting to Lancer Books back in 1969; they used the art to wrap around **The Mighty Barbarians**, a sword and sorcer book which just happened to feature a character by the name of Conan. More of the same followed with a smattering of science fiction titles thrown in for good measure. Almost all of them originally saw publication in the pulps.

I suppose that when Berkley-Medallion decided to bring back G-8 and his Battle Aces it was only natural that they asked me to do the job. Two other artists (Mort Kunstler and Lou Feck) originally had the assignment, which had been completed and printed, only to be rejected just before release as unsuitable. The problem was handed over to me and I hymned out the first three before they decided to try a new approach by utilizing the original pulp covers, complete with type, on their reprints. I was also to be assigned the Spider covers, but sales negated further publication.

A series of westerns came next, then the assignment to illustrate a series featuring Leigh Brackett's Stark, another pulp-born hero. If it sounds like I'd been in a rut, nothing could be further from the truth. I enjoyed every minute of it.

Then, I heard The Shadow adventures were scheduled for [redacted] by Pyramid Books. Fortunately, an old friend of mine, Joel Friedman was involved in persuading Pyramid to repackage the Shadow, and recommended me as a possible choice as the cover artist. I submitted samples of my previous work (as did several artists), crossed my fingers and waited to hear the word.

It was the chance of a lifetime, one of those very special occasions, because I've been a long time follower of The Shadow's adventures, had managed to collect (at that time) several hundred of the original pulps, and knew both Walter Gibson and Bruce Elliott, The Shadow's writers. I was more than pleased when Pyramid gave me the nod for the series—so was Walter, because it kept the task of visualizing The Shadow "in the family."

It's my belief that doing a series of cover paintings requires that the artist have a philosophy about the subject matter. Pyramid probably felt much the same way when they looked at my credentials and handed out the assignment. To prove my point, check out the previous Shadow revival published by Bantam and you'll see what I mean. Their half dozen reprints, released during the height of the Doc Savage success, turned The Shadow into a grinning, mad-dog maniac that showed a lack of understanding of both the character and the market. Perhaps no one had bothered to develop a philosophy for the series. Result: failure!

In this case, I'd already done my homework; I knew The Shadow as well (and probably better) than anyone else available for the job. The character was well-defined by Gibson and by the pulp artists who illustrated the books over a period of almost twenty years. There were variations, of course, but the George Rozen Shadow will always be the Shadow to hard core followers of the series. Besides being the best draftsman to paint covers for the pulps, Rozen captured the essence of the character better than any other artist.

Unlike G-8, Stark and the Wildcat O'Shea westerns where I created an imagery for the character, The Shadow's already existed—my task was to continue it. I went through the old pulps methodically, absorbing all that came before. I stored it and prepared to synthesize all I had been into a new series of paintings. I was ready.

Pyramid made the decision to reprint the first novel, **The Living Shadow**, and wanted a definitive portrait to use on that book, and on the back cover of all which were to follow. I gave them the standard Shadow, a three-quarters view which shows the hawk nose and eyes to best advantage (and learned that full-face and profile were much less dramatic and, more importantly, less identifiable).

The second painting (for **The Black Master**) was my first creative effort for the series—and a disappointing one for me personally. I began by rereading the novel to find the scene I wanted to portray in the painting—and found it in a confrontation sequence between The Shadow and his adversary in had an interesting prop too, a kind of electrified crystal ball—a device that could hook the reader into being intrigued enough to buy the book.

I did a number of roughs (pencil sketches) and submitted the best four. Usually I submit one or two. In my approach, I was attempting to get as close to the pulp look as possible while still keeping in mind the smaller restrictive size of the paperback cover—less than half the size of a pulp cover. Another consideration was the format's typography: the price, the number of the book, the caption, the title, the author, and finally the Shadow logo—all stacked against the right margin, giving me about two-thirds of the cover for illustration area!

In the first rough (A), I showed an almost full-figure of The Shadow, guns drawn and ready for battle. The upraised ball and accompanying electrical bolts seemed to work very well, but I wanted a more dramatic figure, and perhaps one which was closer to the viewer. In the next (B), The Shadow seemed too large, the ball not large and menacing enough. In the third rough (C), I had the right figure, one that silhouetted well and defined the action clearly, with the cast shadow a nice touch. I resolved the composition in the final rough (D) by centering the figure, letting the cloak swing down and underlap the hands to create the effect of distance, made the ball larger, and pulled the Shadow's gun hand in tighter to his body as though he were in the action of pivoting it inward us—because we had the villain's subjective view.

This was it as far as I was concerned—and when it feels right, I stop. I submitted the roughs for

A

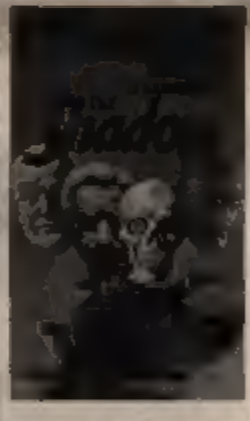
B

C

D

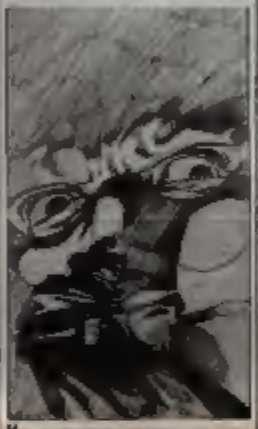
E

F



G

A



H

I

approval and waited for an answer. Unfortunately, that approval and the deadline fell during the time I was in production with **MEDIASCENE**, forcing me to render the painting in the shortest amount of time—most of a Sunday (as I remember) and completed in a single sitting.

I like to take several days with any painting but in this case it was impossible. Certain areas, like the low angle view of The Shadow's face, were unsatisfactory to me. I realized, too late, that The Shadow doesn't look like The Shadow from this angle—a mistake I wouldn't repeat again. I had also failed to specify cropping instructions when the art was turned in. If you mask off about a half inch on each side of the cover you'll see it as I intended it to run.

The third cover wasn't mine. George Rosen had passed away and Pyramid used one of his old pulp paintings for **Nicbarman on the Spot** and gave the cover fee to his wife. It seemed like a small sacrifice to make for someone who contributed so much of his talent for our pleasure.

In the meantime, I was busy working up roughs for the next three books, one for each book. They were submitted, approved and returned to me in a block, giving me a reasonable amount of time to complete the assignments. Somehow in the process, the fourth and sixth covers were switched when printed.

Hands in the Dark (E) is probably my favorite painting and certainly the one which took the longest amount of time—four days. Three days is about the average. I enjoyed working on this one because of the unusual color combinations and the bizarre subject matter. Painting with raw color right out of the tube is not one of my strong points and it was a challenge to make it work. Raw color, of course, is part of the pulp formula.

I normally do a minimum of research for my paintings, generally because they're too fantastic and have to be created right on the canvas. On this painting, I researched Indian mythology for the face of Kali which was used on the door of the casket (though considerably changed by the time I had adapted it to my purpose). The result was a good action cover.

One of the considerations to be made is that each cover must be a predominantly different color, generally alternating between warm and cool hues. The reason is so readers will recognize a new edition simply by its color.

While **Hands in the Dark** almost literally depicted a scene from the story, the next book, **Double Z**, was designed to symbolize the action. The layout (F) was a departure from the previous four, and allowed me to use a blinding red-orange background. The trio of heads were portraits of the characters, with the skull representing death. Notice in the final painting I eliminated one of Death's eyes for an added touch of the macabre. Some have suggested the portraits above The Shadow were deliberate characterizations of Sidney Greenstreet, Claude Rains and Boris Karloff. Though there may be some resemblance, let me assure you it was merely coincidence.

The art which appears on **The Crime Cult** (G) is also one of my favorites because of the somber mood and symbolic drama it evokes.

J

K

L

M

N

O

up to this point, I had done color roughs on tissue paper over the pencil sketches to work out the best color combinations, something I generally save until the actual painting. With this job, I was confident enough to switch back to that method again.

The seventh cover, **Red Menace**, was painted in a monochromatic harmony suggested, of course, by the title. Painting with a limited palette (in this instance, red, red-orange) is much easier for me than working with a full palette (a complete color range). Jim Bama's Doc Savage covers are all painted in monochromes, for example. Both Pyramid and myself wanted the Shadow series to have a different look about them and made a deliberate attempt to stay away from the "Doc Savage" style. Nevertheless, **Red Menace** (H) came off well by looking completely different from the preceeding titles while still remaining within the structure established for the cover format.

Mox was an interesting challenge because of the novel's gothic atmosphere. I assembled all the correct elements in my first rough (I) but somehow missed in the picture's composition. I wasn't completely satisfied that the Shadow silhouetted well enough, in addition to the fact that his gun carried the viewer's eye right off the left side of the page, while the figure with the knife did the same to the right side.

I reassembled the elements and changed the basic composition (J) of the cover to lean to the left instead of the right which strengthened the art considerably. Starting with the lightest value (the protruding post which juts up from the lower right corner of the illustration), the eye travels upward across the chimney, to the left, stops at the crouching figure, follows the knife downward to the tower and back up to The Shadow again. The direction of the Shadow's gun also gave special emphasis to the menacing figure behind the chimney. The spiral composition seemed to be a very suitable solution for **Mox**. Notice that I eliminated the bats from the final painting; they were a distraction. I felt I had really begun to capture the essence of the pulps with this cover.

The Romanoff Jewels which followed offered the best story in the series to that point, and a host of interesting graphic possibilities. The book held a dozen intriguing scenes to play with, but I knew I'd never forgive myself if I declined to use Red Square as a background with St. Basil's obelisk looming recognizably in the distance.

My initial rough (K) investigated the possibilities of a grouping with The Shadow in mortal combat with a cluster of Russian policemen. The idea seemed like a workable one, but didn't capture the mood of the setting. Note the Shadow's wounded arm. The next rough (L) caught that mood well by showing The Shadow in the foreground, his shadow cast across the middleground of attacking policemen, and the background of St. Basil's.

The rough was returned to me with a suggestion to make the figure of The Shadow larger and placed more centrally in the composition. I returned to the figure in the first rough and placed The Shadow against a background of fire and fighting men. The idea (M) was still

good, but somehow awkward—and again failed to conjure up the mood I was trying for. The next sketch (N) managed to succeed on all counts, as I wounded The Shadow in the upstate shoulder, substituted the background action for mist, and added a heavy iron gate for atmosphere. Pyramid agreed and I proceeded to paint the ninth cover.

The Silent Seven offered as many possibilities as the previous book, and I submitted two roughs, either of which I felt were suitable to sell the book at the newsstand. The drawing which showed The Shadow towering over the seven hooded figures (O) evoked a mysterious and bizarre spectacle, though not as bizarre as the second rough (P) with its clutching, disembodied hands. Pyramid chose the latter, probably because the figure of The Shadow was larger. They also insisted on a dark background, while I had suggested white for this cover. In the finished painting, I gave The Shadow two guns instead of one, rendered him in lifelike flesh tones, and colored the hands a contrasting pale bloodless purple. The printed cover should have moved The Shadow closer to the left side and run his slouch hat over the title logo.

The title Kings of Crime presented its own solution (Q) (R) for the eleventh book in the series. Again a symbolic cover, this time with The Shadow playing against death himself. Though the skeletal hand holds four kings, The Shadow's ace and his trusty .45 automatic will probably take the pot. The finished painting combined the best elements of both roughs for a really striking pulp-like cover.

Shadowed Millions suggested a grain cover and I submitted two based on that theme, both equally suitable as cover material. The first (S) perhaps gave the idea The Shadow was rifling the safe instead of protecting its contents, while there was no mistaking the second (T). I liked the tie-in with the city motif in this rough.

Before I discuss the various stages of painting, I think it's important to stress the value of the roughs. It is during this phase that the problems of design, pattern, shape, composition and tonal range are solved—and to me, this represents most of the total creative effort. The physical rendering of the painting requires skill and craftsmanship, but the bulk of the creative work has already been completed.

Often when I'm busy with the actual rendering of a painting, I'm solving my next creative problem mentally—a method by which I am able to double my work output.

Working out a rough for a cover sometimes can take as long as a day or two, sometimes just a few minutes. I continue until I feel I have met all the demands I have personally made for the assignment. My paperback roughs are always done in pencil the exact size in which the finished cover will appear. As I stated earlier, I work out the colors while I paint, though I have a good idea ahead of time about my basic color schemes.

Too often, beginners fail to comprehend the importance of working out the details of a painting or drawing in a smaller abbreviated rough. Unless they are geniuses, they usually discover the finished art has serious flaws that cannot be corrected without a major overhaul.

The actual painting time can take anywhere from half a day to a week; I prefer to take about three days to complete a cover. I paint The Shadow covers on 24" x 30" Masonite board, 1/8" thick. Before painting, I prepare the surface with three coats of white Gesso applied in opposing directions for complete coverage. This gives the paint a surface to hold on to.

Next, I'll wrap a sheet of white paper around the board, taping it in place, and replenish the drawing onto the sheet in large size. I'm very careful to allow for the space the title will take, and for the back cover to be trimmed, top, bottom and side. During this stage (figure 1), I carefully work out the details of the composition, perhaps moving a hand or changing the tilt of a head, until I'm totally satisfied with the composition. Objects such as guns are meticulously developed in this stage to keep painting errors to a minimum.

The drawing is now transferred to the surface of the board with a home-made carbon sheet, and the original drawing is removed. Then, I roughly paint in all the dark areas and details like eyes, brows and fingers, generally with burnt umber. Sometimes, I'll lay in a second block of color, such as a basic flesh tone or red in the cloak area, to further define the painting (2).

Paintings should be developed from the back to the front, so I'll complete the background at this point (3). Now, I'll attempt to block in appropriate areas of color and eliminate any white still showing through from the Gesso.

At this stage, I render the subject's face and hands (4), after which the remainder of the figure will be painted. This basic work establishes the important areas of the cover art, and allows subordinate areas to be gauged with added judgement.

The final stage follows: completing the foreground painting, adding minute details and any repainting of previously rendered areas (5). Now I look at the painting at a distance to determine which elements, if any, must be changed or highlighted, realizing, of course, that the art will be reduced to less than one quarter of its original size. Signing the painting is all that remains to complete the job.

I paint The Shadow (and most of my commercial assignments) in acrylics because of its quick-drying quality. I'm often asked how I'm able to achieve certain effects like a smooth blending of tones and colors. The only answer I am able to offer is, "I just paint it the way it feels right to me." Having no formal art training or schooling, I've never heard of the things acrylic paint won't do.

Well, that's my procedure. I hope you have the opportunity to see some of the original paintings at the various exhibits at which they are shown around the country. I believe you'll find them to be considerably more exciting than the small paperback reproductions.

And if you happen to be an artist, there's a possibility that sometime in the future, you, like me, will be hard at work turning out a series of Shadow paintings. Anything can happen!

Who knows....?●

POSTERS

BAD DOIN'S
BERNI WRIGHTSON

Any number of artists have mastered the art of satire; just as many are successful portraying the weird and bizarre. But few can handle gallows humor like Berni Wrightson, who's just created his first full-color poster print, **BAD DOIN'S IN KNUCKLEDOWNS LONESOME.** A trio of grisly graverobbers get more than they bargained for. *So will you!!* $3.00 plus .50 postage. Wrightson's better than ever!

LOW TIDE
M.W. KALUTA

A landscape that vibrates with strange, unearthly colors. Tortured towers of rock reach for the skies as their bases are crudely eroded by the river's rush. An unexpected wind whistles continuously through the canyon; making the twisted trees and sparse shrubbery shiver at its touch. Overlooking the scene, a bizarre dome-like structure with the mystic symbol of a half-moon perched above the entranceway. *LOOK!* Is that two mermaids sunbathing on a mossy ledge? It all happens once upon a time in Mike Kaluta's **LOW TIDE**, $3.00 plus .50 postage.

Cover your ears—don't listen to the **WIZARD'S KNELL**. No one knows what it means, but there are tales told about what happens when the bells chime their unearthly symphony. Sometimes you can see them, figures clad in black robes, conjuring hellborn images in the flames that surround them. Don't watch the rituals they perform, don't witness their unholy incantations. But most of all, don't listen to the singing of the bells, the chimes called the **WIZARD'S KNELL**. Mike Kaluta did. *He hasn't been the same since.* $3.00 plus .50 postage. Use the order form.

WIZARD'S KNELL
M.W. KALUTA

SUPER HEROES
NEAL ADAMS

Neal Adams had drawn countless stories and illustrated dozens of comic super heroes, but he's only created *one poster which features all his greatest characters.* Here on this large (17" x 24") full-color reproduction, Neal Adams recalls, DEADMAN, the relentless, red-clad avenger who haunted the comics all too briefly in the late 60's. **THE SPECTRE** is also on hand, gesturing grimly toward the destiny of master criminals, while below, **THE GREEN ARROW**, prepares to shaft those who stand in the path of justice. An action figure of **BATMAN** completes the quartet. $3.00 plus .50 postage for **HEROES.**

The chant began softly at first, and grew into a chilling wall that was punctuated by groans and sobs. These priests garbed in weird vestments were exorcising The Sacraments of The Damned. There was no stopping now. The Dark Presence was already entering the sacrificial chamber. They needed blood, and their victim hung chained to a massive pillar above them. He was called **CONAN**, the mighty barbarian from the North, the survivor of a thousand deadly battles. The girl approached him, dagger upraised while a twisted, hideous gnome crept nearby clutching the sacrificial basin. Suddenly, he reached out and drew her to him in a savage embrace. Then, the chains began to part. **CONAN** was free! A fantastic new print by Mike Kaluta.

CONAN
M.W. KALUTA

SIEGFRIED
BERNI WRIGHTSON

We went deeper into the abyss, his only weapon an invincible sword, Balmunga, taken from the heart of the earth itself. Waiting at the bottom of the pit, Fafnir, the great beast crouched in silence. Suddenly, the mighty warrior appeared, sheathed in armor and leather, and challenged the monster to mortal combat. The earth shook from the battle; then the dragon was slain. The man bathed in the beast's magic blood and made his skin invulnerable to sword or arrow. Here is **SIEGFRIED**, the legendary hero of the Nibelungen saga—the first in a series of FANTASY AND HORROR PRINTS by Berni Wrightson.

Horror is so much more so when its unexpected—and Berni Wrightson knows it best! Here is the second sinister print in Wrightson's new FANTASY AND HORROR SERIES, an exceptional hair-raiser he calls **FREAKS**. Imagine a quiet countryside on a Sunday afternoon. A couple walks among a rainbow of flowers, finally stoping to rest on a mossy hill overlooking a green valley. Then, there's a movement behind them. A man emerges—he has no legs! Another figure appears; a boy with the face of a wolf! Now a three-armed man and a pinhead with a smaller head growing from its neck. Then, others beyond description, their eyes filled with insane and murderous lust. *Look out! The* **FREAKS** *are loose!*

FREAKS
BERNI WRIGHTSON

CONAN
BERNI WRIGHTSON

At last, a full-color Wrightson poster featuring the most savage barbarian of them all. **CONAN!** Wrightson's CONAN is a massive muscled warrior, a giant gladiator who doesn't know the meaning of defeat. His only fear—the supernatural. Here he battles a soul-sucking tentacled serpent, armed with two short swords that hack and tear at the sinuous hellish coils that tighten around him. **CONAN** as you've never seen him before!!

"I'VE GOT 72 HOURS TO LIVE CHANDLER! I WANT YOU TO FIND MY MURDERER!"
CHANDLER
CRACKLES WITH THE FURY OF A THUNDERBOLT!
IN THE TOUGH TRADITION OF THE MALTESE FALCON AND CHINATOWN!
A POWERFUL FICTION ILLUSTRATED NOVEL FROM PYRAMID
STERANKO

Who is Chandler?

It depends on who's doing the answering!

Ask Byron Preiss or Pyramid Books and they'll tell you Chandler is an innovative new kind of publication, produced in a unique, experimental format.

To Steranko, who created the character, Chandler represents a dramatic re-emergence into the field of graphic storytelling—his first work of this type for almost five years.

To those who will read his adventures, Chandler, hopefully, will be an experience well worth waiting for. Chandler is a private investigator molded from the same clay that produced Sam Spade or Philip Marlowe or the Continental Op—a rough, rugged, fast-on-the-desk private eye always up to his shoulder holster in hoods, homicide and honey blondes.

The genesis of Chandler began, typically, on a razor-cold day in early January in Manhattan. Steranko and Preiss were having a breakfast discussion about the latter's new publications in a 30's type restaurant around 78th and Madison. Two volumes of **Weird Heroes** and the upcoming **Fiction Illustrated** conversation.

Somewhere between forkfuls of bacon and eggs, Preiss asked the usual question: "How about doing a novel for **Fiction Illustrated**; I've got the third issue open if you can handle it."

"What did you have in mind?"

"How about Tarzan! Don't you think we've waited long enough?"

"I need a big book and a lot of area for Tarzan."

"Well, how about a western, you've always talked about doing one?"

"Time's not right. Maybe a detective story—they're back in style again in full force." The waitress refilled their coffee cups while early lunchers straggled into the warmth. The current explosion of private eye and mystery films such as **Farewell My Lovely, Chinatown, Murder on the Orient Express** and **The Drowning Pool** seemed to prove out the thought.

Riding on the idea, Steranko mentioned a detective character and a visual style for the story he'd been thinking about for the past several years. He said the concept wouldn't mesh well with the **Fiction Illustrated** line, too experimental, too offbeat for a nationally distributed book.

"Wait a minute! Why don't you get the the rights to use Philip Marlowe, or maybe Sam Spade for a book?" Suddenly, the idea was very hot.

"I've looked into it, but there's a lot of red tape involved—could take months, maybe years. Why not create a character of your own?"

Why not? The January wind sang against the frosty windows, and the diner's run-down art deco atmosphere seemed to help focus concentration on the idea.

Thirty seconds ebbed away.

"Got it! A traditional private eye character, not a jockey or a librarian or a dog trainer who moonlights by solving crimes on the side—a story within the classic framework of the detective genre. Sure, I know it's been done, probably too many times, but it's a solid, entertaining form—and I know I've got a couple of them in me."

"Sounds like it could work. Got a name?"

"That's the best part. I've got a name that's synonymous with detective fiction—Chandler!"

The name, of course, refers to Raymond Chandler, one of the foremost writers of what has come to be known as the "hardboiled" or **Black Mask** school of detective fiction. To those who miss the connection, Raymond Chandler created the Philip Marlowe of **Farewell My Lovely, The Big Sleep, Murder My Sweet, Lady in the Lake** and a few others. To those who know, the name Chandler is an icon, instantly suggesting a world of betrays and violence.

"That's it! I think you've got it!"

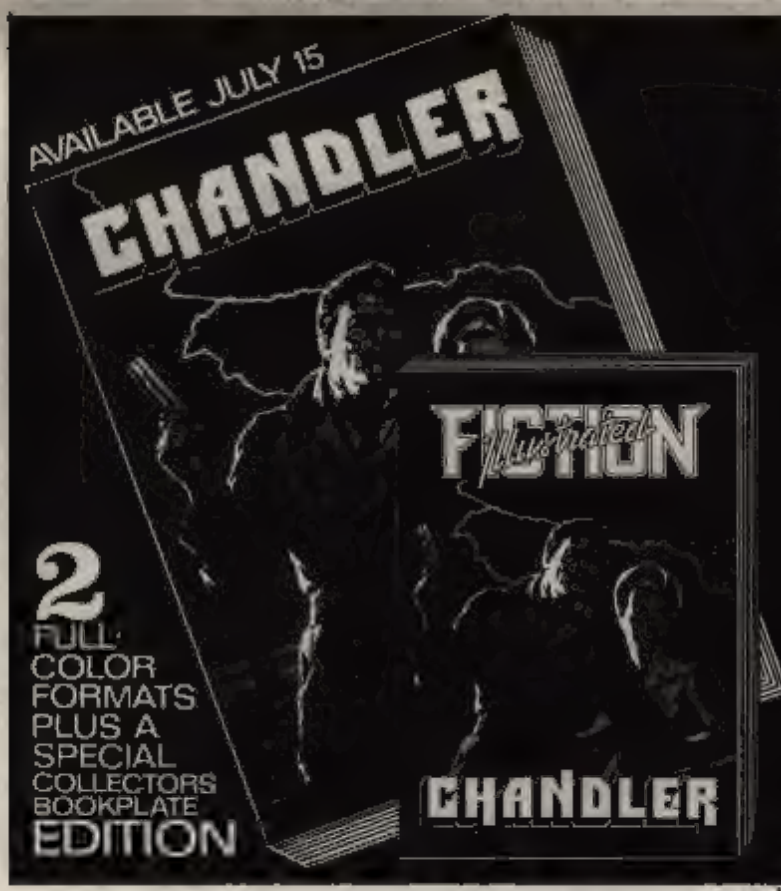
By the middle of February, a contract was signed, but not before Steranko had created a format for the book. **Fiction Illustrated** is a digest-sized publication printed throughout in full-color. The first of the series, *Sahjeng Again*, utilizes, more or less, a straight comic style of storytelling; the second, *Starlawn*, is comparable. Nevertheless, Steranko felt that a new approach to the storytelling technique was called for, one which would bridge the gap between straight comics and an adult visual novel form. He agreed to produce the illustrated novel (as both writer and artist) only after the problem had been solved. That solution could be a new milestone in the chronology of graphic storytelling.

Steranko is no stranger to the art of visual narrative. His credits include a notable contribution to Marvel's award-winning **Nick Fury—Agent of Shield** and **Captain America** series, a stretch at Paramount's animation studios, the development of a film project with French director Alain Resnais, and a number of books on the subject, including **The History of Comics.**

Unlike Philip Marlowe, who makes sunny California his home, Chandler is a New York operator, an area which Steranko knows very well. The story (well over 100 pages long) is set in the 30's/40's era of **The Maltese Falcon, Laura, Chinatown, Out of the Past, The Dark Corner** and **The Big Sleep.** The plot itself concerns the hunt for a gangland assassin—and has more unexpected twists than a barrel of pretzels, none of which we'll even hint at here.

The first Chandler case, *Red Tide*, will plunge the reader into a high-voltage manhunt against a sadistic killer who turned the city into a concrete nightmare. Be warned ahead of time, this book is packed with violent action—and a double-barreled mystery that will keep you guessing right up until the last page.

One thing we can tell you—the butler didn't do it!



Who is Chandler?

He's six feet of hard boiled private eye, with a talent for trouble, an eye for beauty, a knockout punch in each fist—and a .45 automatic stuck in a shoulder holster, for when the going gets rough.

He's a hunter, tracking a sadistic killer through the concrete jungle of New York City in the late 30's.

He's a sucker, a suspect, a killer, a lover, a loser, a victim, and a hero with a ticket to ride, all rolled up in a wrinkled trenchcoat with a pocketful of bad luck.

He's a tough new detective hero, created by Steranko in the tradition of Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade, who finds himself involved in an almost impossible case, working for a man doomed to die and hungry for revenge.

Follow Chandler down the twisted corridors of the human soul as the plays a deadly game of murder with a hired killer, whose only rule is that there are NO rules.

RED TIDE is the first adventure of an exciting, realistic new convict by Steranko, and the initial offering from Pyramid's graphic novel series, *FICTION ILLUSTRATED.*

Written and illustrated by Steranko (his first effort in five years), *Chandler* is the graphic story's answer to the great private eye films of the 40's: The Maltese Falcon, Murder My Sweet and The Big Sleep. It [illegible] style, in a suspense-packed story where nothing is ever what it seems to be.

Chandler will be available in two sizes for the collector:

The **DIGEST EDITION** of *Chandler* is printed on newsprint in full-color, for only $1.00 plus .25 postage and handling.

The **DELUXE LIMITED EDITION** is published in an oversized volume, in full-color on heavy vellum stock, wrapped in stiff board covers. This edition is priced at $4.95 plus .50 postage and handling.

And available exclusively from Supergraphics is the special **BOOKPLATE EDITION**, limited to 750 copies. This edition is distinguished by 4 unique illustrated bookplates, which will be personally numbered and autographed by Steranko. Chandler's award-winning artist and writer. Lowest numbers will be given to the earliest orders. $7.50 plus .50 postage and handling.

Whichever edition you choose, you'll get a brand new high-tension detective thriller with over 100 pages of full-color. An atmospheric wraparound painting by Steranko covers each book, and makes the entire edition a valuable addition to your collection.

If you're a Steranko fan—and if you like bigger-than-life Bogart, Cagney and Robinson films of the 40's, you'll want to meet Chandler face to face in his [illegible]

HITCHCOCK
THE FAMILY PLOT

He pulled the shirt off his great neck, to show where they cut him, just below the collar bone.

He traced the scar with his short, fat finger and said, almost casually, that he was fully conscious as the scalpel parted his left, white skin.

"They found a vein," he said, "that leads to my heart and they poked a wire in it, a wire with an electrode on the end."

He pulled his shirt lower, showing a lump the size of a cigarette pack. He tapped the lump and explained: "to this thing they screwed the loose end of the wire."

Alfred Hitchcock smiled, and his whole face mobilized, as if somebody had parted a curtain of flesh to reveal the entrance to a cave, the teeth, stalactite and stalagmite formations.

"A four-year pace-maker they call it. In four years I go back and they change the batteries," he says, his vast bulk spilling out of his office chair, his hands resting on his paunch.

He has just finished his 53rd movie, **Family Plot**, a venture, he admits, that almost finished him, evidence, the pacemaker.

"It was the mental strain. I went dizzy. They rushed me to the best specialist in Beverly Hills and he immediately went to work on me. Now I feel fine."

Family Plot stars Karen Black, Bruce Dern, Barbara Harris and William Devane, but most of all it stars Hitchcock, despite the fact that his appearance is limited to the customary walk-on.

"I go before the cameras because people EXPECT to see me, however briefly. At least, that's what I'm told."

Family Plot is a two-pronged story sewn tightly with a kidnapping, a bogus medium, the search for a lost son and a syringe of sodium pentothol stuck into the back of a hijacked bishop. Once again Horrible Hitch has manufactured a film so disturbingly rich in tension that the audience will sweat. "Not a dry seat in the house!! That's what I say!"

The film has been two years in the making and, under his contract with Universal Studios, where he keeps spacious offices, Hitchcock has two more movies to go. So now it's back to the "pigeon holes," where he has squirreled away ideas gathered over the years, including one that flashed through his mind as he toured a Ford Motors assembly plant.

In the mind's eye he saw the camera turning on two men strolling beside the line, just talking; behind them, a car was growing from a stark black frame. At about the time the screen credits pass, one of the men slips behind the wheel of the car, as the other fills it with gas, slams the hood shut, tests the doors . . . and opens the trunk.

Cut to his face: horror, sheer unadulterated horror.

Cut to the trunk: a body.

Trouble is, Hitchcock can't find the next scene.

Once he was sitting alone in a garden, as he loves to do, when he saw a single mynah bird land on a tree; how beautiful, he thought. He looked at it a long time and imagined the tree suddenly packed with birds. Soon, other trees were screaming with them, and they became so thick in the sky they blotted out the sun.

HOW HORRIBLE, he thought!

He re-created the scene two decades later in a movie called **The Birds.**

Besides being born with "an acute sense of vision," Hitchcock possesses a remarkable sense of timing—which he developed in boarding school. There, he explains, boys were punished with "cuts" on the hand delivered from a leather strap, of the type used to hone "cut-throat" razors.

The punishment was administered in a special room by a special Jesuit priest, at a time selected by the pupil. "The pain was not so much in the hand, as it was in the mind, as one could choose one's own time to be cut.

He draws heavily on this principle. To some filmmakers, horror is putting a bomb in a packed restaurant and recording the debris, the bodies. Hitchcock would take the same bomb and put it under the table, where the audience can see it ticking away, with five minutes to go . . . while two men sit above it calmly talking football.

"This way you cause the audience to worry. Here are these two nice men talking football, while a bomb is about to go off. The audience is helpless. So they become tense, worked up. When it has reached a point that is almost unbearable, you explode the bomb."

Hitchcock leans back, raises a fleshy finger, and says cautiously: "But you must never, never let anybody get hurt by that bomb. If you draw blood, the audience will be extremely angry with you."

His formula for wringing sweat from armpits is based largely on the idea of giving people information that potential victims on the screen do not have. He also strives to avoid cliches. Hitchcock villains do not kick dogs; they smile and charm beautiful ladies. His locations for the most diabolical crimes are not haunted houses, swarming with rats, busy with bats and bathed in moonlight; for the celebrated knifing of **Psycho** he used a common, everyday shower. **The Birds** was shot in Pasadena, a quiet, country town.

"My killers are the type of people you want to take home to meet mother. They are very, VERY nice. It's like one of them once said, 'I'm very sorry, madam, but I have to kill you.' How polite. How considerate."

Professionally, he complains his reputation has cramped his style. "For example, I couldn't make a musical because as the camera shot along the line of Rockettes, people would be wondering which of the girls was going to be shot. They would always be looking for the crime. And quite rightly. The shot girl would be the one who's leg stayed up when all the other legs came down."

Few directors have had such constant success as Alfred Hitchcock. His name SELLS at the box office. People come, he explains, because they WANT to be scared, to enjoy it in the same way that, as children, they enjoyed hearing how the old lady was put in the oven in **Hansel and Gretel.**

He agrees, also, that his name gives him a certain edge, adding: "They know what they're going to get. My name is a label. Just as Agatha Christie's name is a label. My subject matter has remained constant."

After 76 years, Alfred Hitchcock has been around movies as long as they've been wrapping film around a spool. Born in Leytonstone, Essex, his greatest thrill as a boy was to visit the theater. He was educated in a Jesuit seminary, studied blacksmithing, screw turning, the lathe and draftsmanship, which led him to art.

All the while he consumed American movie magazines, becoming an authority on "them," as opposed to "English." By continually updating his silver library he has been able to produce film hits in both the U.S. and in Britain. "Americanisms are acceptable in England, but the reverse is not true. So you must call it a truck, not a 'lorry;' an elevator, not a 'lift.'"

Hitchcock was summoned to Hollywood in 1937 by David O. Selznick—who promptly sent him back to England to direct **Jamaica Inn.** Back in the States, he made his reputation with such classics as **Rebecca, Lifeboat, Spellbound, Rear Window, North by Northwest** and **Psycho.**

Today he lives quietly in Bel Air, in a house overlooking the golf course. His favorite pastime, says wife Alma, is "sitting in a big rocking chair overlooking the lawns and snoozing off." Besides making movies, the other thing Hitchcock does well is eat. He has a walk-in refrigerator, a sculptured head of himself sitting on the shelf.

To announce his latest movie, he threw a luncheon for a couple of hundred reporters—in a graveyard.

His sense of humor is classic. When a man wrote complaining his wife would no longer take a shower, after watching Janet Leigh murdered in the bathtub in **Psycho**, Hitchcock wrote back: "Sir, have you considered sending your wife to the dry cleaners?"

While Hitchcock enjoys the wealth, power and a certain notoriety, he remains at heart an amiable, articulate, uncomplicated man with basic tastes.

Asked for his idea of happiness, he says quietly: "A clear horizon, no clouds, no shadows, nothing."

Joel Thingvall

BIG APPLE COMIX

Take a bite of Neal Adams, Al Williamson, Wally Wood, Archie Goodwin, Mike Ploog, Alan Weiss, Larry Hama, Herb Trimpe, Ralph Reese, Marie Severin and others! Nine Yorkers all, they've banded together to explore a myriad of Manhattan's mysteries- and live to tell about it. There are eight million stories in the naked city and (to quote BIG APPLE) all of them are dull. YET THEY MUST BE TOLD! Here are tales guaranteed to bring tears to your eyes (or is it the smog?) At last a book that manages to offend almost everyone. But why take our word- send us a buck and see for yourself!

LONE STAR FICTIONEER

At last a top quality magazine about the man who created *CONAN* the legendary Robert Howard! LONE STAR FICTIONEER This book, printed offset between full-color covers, explores the many worlds created by Robert E. Howard and features (like King Kull, Red Sonja, Stan Mac Mom and others leave it is the best yet and runs an UNPUBLISHED HOWARD ADVENTURE— illustrated with three full-page action drawings by Steranko in addition. LSF 4 features a portfolio of Alfredo Alcala, and art by Alex Nino George Barr, Steve Fabian, John Severin, Frank Frazetta, Marcus Boas Marie Severin Roy Krenkel and others

COMIC SHOWCASE

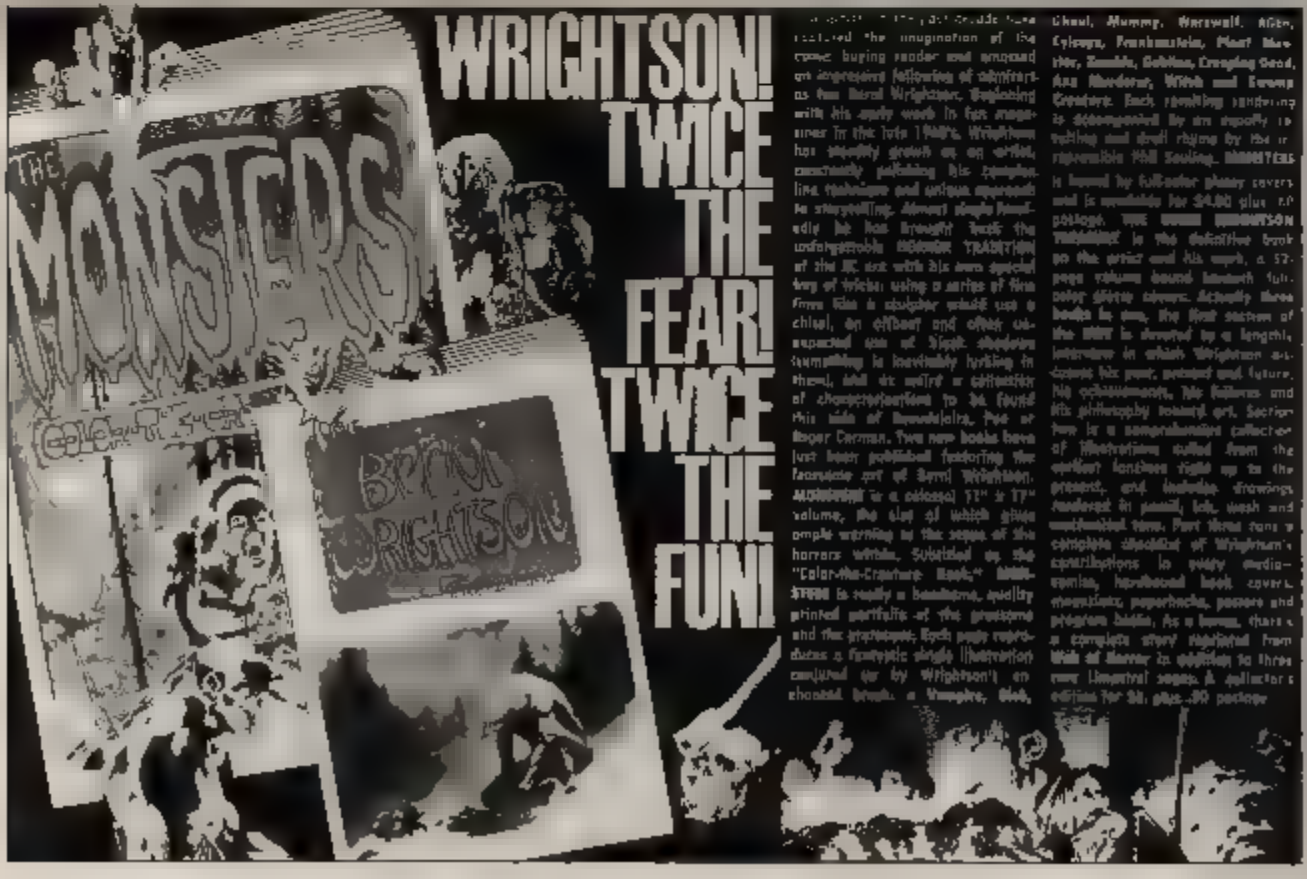
If original artwork holds a special fascination for you, then Comic Showcase may be the next step in enlarging your collection of comic pages and paintings. Comic Showcase is a quality, 52-page combination catalog and portfolio featuring original art for sale. Each piece of art is seen in its entirety with full-color cover paintings by Neal Adams and Berni Wrightson undistorted by type. Newspaper comic and advertising artwork and paintings are featured. Foster Raymond, Frazetta, Kirby Kubert, Kelly Nino, Marcos, Smith and many, many all more appear in Showcase 5, available March 26

GRAPHIC GALLERY

For those who have never seen it, GRAPHIC GALLERY is a catalog of original comic artwork and illustration published for the purpose of advertising the art for sale. At the same time, it is also a finely printed volume representing the best artists who ever picked up a pencil and brush. Issue 5 features full-page color reproductions by CARL BARKS, FRANK FRAZETTA and a complete 2-page story by RICH CORBEN, in addition to KURTZMAN's 12-page *PWOOOONG*, Raymond, Foster Harriman, Hogarth, Segar Kirby Kubert, Jones, Williamson, many more, Limited supply

JEFF JONES IDYL

Who but Jeff Jones could create such a woman? Who but Jeff Jones would want to? Imagine someone who's poignant, beautiful, selfish, wicked, elegant, audacious, vainglorious, philosophic, carnivorous, outrageous— Imagine all these things and you've envisioned Jones IDYL. Over 40 fantastic tables collected for the connoisseur in this handsome oversized edition—a large 11" x 17" format printed offset on quality stock. The testament of IDYL is available at $5.95 plus .50 postage. You'll find IDYL to be a fascinating companion- but will she be too much for you to handle?



WRIGHTSON! TWICE THE FEAR! TWICE THE FUN!

[illegible] has captured the imagination of the comic buying reader and amassed an impressive following of admirers as Berni Wrightson. Beginning with his early work in fan magazines in the late 1960's, Wrightson has steadily grown as an artist, consistently polishing his scratchline technique and unique approach to storytelling. Almost single handedly he has brought back the unforgettable HORROR TRADITION of the 30's and with his own special way of writing using a series of fine lines like a sculptor would use a chisel, an offbeat and often unexpected use of light, shadow, [illegible] is inevitably lurking in there. And it's weird a collection of characterizations to be found this side of Baudelaire. Poe or Roger Corman. Two new books have just been published featuring the fantastic art of Berni Wrightson. MASTERPRINTS is a colossal 11" x 17" volume, the size of which gives ample warning to the scope of the horrors within. Subtitled as the "Color-Me-Creature Book," MONSTERS is really a beautiful, quality printed portfolio of the creatures and the protagonists. Each page reproduces a fantastic single illustration conjured up by Wrightson's enchanted brush. a Vampire, Ghoul, Mummy, Werewolf, Alien, Cyborg, Frankenstein, Mad Monster, Zombie, Gobbler, Creeping Dead, Axe Murderer, Witch and Swamp Creature. Each rambling rendering is accompanied by an equally rambling and droll rhyme by the irrepressible Bill Spicing. MONSTERS is bound by full-color glossy covers and is available for $4.00 plus .50 postage. THE WORLD OF WRIGHTSON Testament is the definitive book on the artist and his work, a 52-page volume bound beneath full-color glossy covers. Actually three books in one, the first section of the book is devoted to a lengthy interview in which Wrightson discusses his past, present and future, his achievements, his failures and his philosophy toward art. Section two is a comprehensive collection of illustrations culled from the earliest fanzines right up to the present, and includes drawings rendered in pencil, ink, wash and mixed media. Part three runs a complete checklist of Wrightson's contributions to every medium—comics, hardbound book covers, magazines, paperbacks, posters and program books. As a bonus, there's a complete story reprinted from Web of Horror in addition to three new Lovecraft pages. A collector's edition for $6, plus .50 postage

ON THE SCREEN: FILM REVIEWS

TAXI DRIVER
Robert DiNiro
Dir Martin Scorsese
Columbia

When at the close of World War II Italian director Roberto Rossellini made **Open City**, he created a new style of cinema by taking to the streets of his battered country-nary a studio set in use-and incorporating the real people of Italy.

Twenty years later a young American director, Martin Scorsese utilized this style in making his second feature, **Mean Streets**, a bitter moving testament to the dramatic alleyways and petty gangsters of Scorsese's native Little Italy in New York City.

While one of the film's stars Robert DiNiro went on to score an Oscar for his fine portrayal of the young Don Corleone in **The Godfather II**, Scorsese was busy directing Ellen Burstyn to an Oscar in **Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore**.

Now Scorsese and DiNiro are reunited in what will undoubtably become a classic film of the humble 1970's. DiNiro turns in an astonishingly detailed portrayal of an alienated ex-Marine suffering from chronic insomnia who, out of despair, turns to driving a taxi at night.

As he cruises the labyrinthine nightworld, both DiNiro and New York City rise before us as spectres of a culture on the brink.

While we watch the circus of sordid and pathetic people slinking about the City we begin to realize that within DiNiro's mind is a coiled serpent bred on loneliness and a burning need to be recognized by his fellow creatures, that finally bursts forth in a splash of contaminated death that chills the very bones because it is not the Sam Peckinpah violence, that in the end is just bloody fantasy. No **Taxi Driver** is the stuff from which dreams are made.

Much of the film has a surreal almost science-fiction look to it (one is constantly reminded of Harlan Ellison's 'A Boy And His Dog' story) as DiNiro's anhurtles street interactions cutting through the thick veils of escaping underground steam to the throb of Bernard Herrmann's Psycho (Citizen Kane) brilliant and evocative score. Like the blood of a futuristic avenging angel, the taxi carries DiNiro from one despising area to another. But he can communicate with no one not even other cabbies, and so he arms himself in preparation for assassinating a presidential candidate-depicted in the film as a liberal completely out of touch with the corrupt forces driving America.

Taxi Driver

Taxi Driver

Crime and Passion

DiNiro's plot fails, perhaps intentionally because he is completely out of his depth confronting the urbane level of society. But his day comes, with a cynical vengeance that borders on irony.

Taxi Driver is a gutwrencher of a film, a nightmare journey into the darkest depths of the human soul. Belching violence and despair it is a relentless depiction of the animalization of America you can't afford to miss.

EVL

CRIME AND PASSION
Oliver Sharif
Karen Black
Dir Ivan Passer
American International

Saddled with an unfortunate title **Crime And Passion** is nevertheless an unusual little suspense film with enough quirky twists and hairpin turns to make it well worthwhile going out of your way to see.

Taken from a novel by veteran mystery writer James Hadley Chase, the story revolves around Sharif as a bejewig investment counselor whose unorthodox tactics have him on the verge of bankruptcy and scandal and his cagey assistant and lover Karen Black.

Sharif hatches a plot whereby Black will marry a millionaire financier who has been bilked by Sharif and then conveniently die after six months or a handsome settlement. Sounds simple enough on the face of it, however all the principles involved are so kinky that the results are quite unexpected.

Sharif, never quite the actor's actor here gives an excellent solid performance with a great deal of life, and Black who has a tendency to overact turns in a finely tuned portrayal.

Crime And Passion is expertly shot on location in Austria, and every advantage is taken of the country side. From the super-modern office buildings of the booming cities where the film begins, to the gothic atmospheric castles hulking like ancient ghosts against a horizon of endless snow the action never lets up.

This sort of very non-American suspense story is extremely difficult to effectively translate to the screen because so much depends on achieving just the right atmosphere. The film has its lapses into melodrama but each time director Ivan Passer presents us with an unusual scene or a powerful image and we're back into the essential suspension-of-reality feeling.

An excellent cast of unknowns supports Sharif and Black, adding to the strange atmosphere of the film. A sleeper that is recommended.

EVL

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

After several lean years, during which many Hollywood producers appeared reluctant to invest in such projects (and during which such Box Office Bombs as **Zardoz** went up in smoke), '76 will see a strong reemergence of the Science-Fiction and Fantasy film. Besides the filmization of William F. Nolan's classic **Logan's Run** (excitingly detailed in **Mediascene's** last ish), a number of important SF projects are at last moving toward fruition.

First there's Frank Herbert's **Dune**, the award-winning saga of interplanetary plotting and the genesis of a latter day messiah. The filming has been wrapped in secrecy ever since it was announced that it would be made into a motion picture and speculation as to whether the producers would be using the Dynamation techniques of Ray Harryhausen (famed for his work on the Sinbad series as well as **Jason And the Argonauts**) to recreate the many spectacular sequences of the book was rife. Latest word, however comes from the music world where it has been confirmed that progressive rock superstars Pink Floyd have been signed to write the film's music, and will release it as their next album whether or not **Dune** ever makes it to our screens.

tolkein tale on theater trail

New word on the long-in-the-filmization of J. R. R. Tolkien's **Lord of the Rings**. Originally slated to roll as an animation feature a la **Yellow Submarine** (wasn't a bad idea, we think) then switched to live action with reportedly Ringo Starr as Frodo, the project has now been acquired from United Artists by MGM. Word is that filming will start in about a month.

Also on the MGM list for '76 is an adaption of Dean R. Koontz's mildly erotic SF **Demon Seed**, about a mega-computer with delusions of grandeur with a twist. It tells in love. Feature should begin shooting in March, however that's subject to star Julie Christie's availability (now we know why the machine flipped, right?). The film won't roll without her.

The big news at Columbia is that one of their so-called 'centerpiece' films for '76 is a SF saga with a budget of about $10,000,000, titled **Close Encounter of The Third Kind**. A measure of the company's commitment to SF can be seen in the fact that the only other 'centerpiece' film this year will be Robert Altman's **Rapture**, from the best-seller by E. L. Doctorow (and it has the same budget). **Encounter**, directed by Steven (Jaws) Spielberg from his own script, commenced shooting at the beginning of March. All that anyone knows about it so far is that it is a complex sci-fi tale.

Columbia's, **The Microcosm** is set to begin filming in July in London. This little opus stars Gregory Peck, Lee Remick, Stacy Keach and James Mason and will be directed by Richard Longraine under the aegis of producer Harry Saltzman (who gave us all hours of good clean fun via the James Bond films). The story is set in an indeterminate future when men and insects are forced to compete for food following an ecological disaster. Sounds yummy.

Filmization of the printed word is always a risky business since with rare exceptions (we'll come to those) the mediums are somewhat incompatible. Two excellent examples of this are **The Great Gatsby** and **The Magus**. Scott Fitzgerald was an author who used language to create atmosphere. The story of the Gatsby is borne along not so much by the events within the story but rather through dialog and description, how they are presented to the reader. Fitzgerald used a very stylized form of dialog that works as a literary device but translated into spoken word on the screen feels miserably flat. the Gatsby relied heavily on mystery: what was not related was just as important as what was. Seeing the Gatsby's love fulfilled was a disappointment—how could it be otherwise?

The Magus, John Fowles unique novel of deception and betrayal—too, relied on language and mystery. The grammar of film makes this kind of reproduction almost impossible.

All this is by way of leading up to a specific point. Neither Dune nor **The Lord of the Rings** is of the new style of fiction—such as **The Taking of Pelham 1, 2, 3** or **The Godfather** which read as if they were outlines for screenplays. SF is a very special genre which has proved to be a remarkably fertile area for film (**2001, Planet of the Apes, War of the Worlds**) when put into the right hands. But the rush to buy movie rights to any book which sells well seems foolish because, in the end, the title will not make a movie a hit. Sure, we'd all like to see the Hobbits on screen but only if their visualization is up to the standards set by their original creator.

Back in the present two current Universal pics, which caused some initial controversy are in release. **Gable And Lombard**, a Sidney J. (Species First Furie) film, created a brouhaha during its casting stages when the producers went through miles of actors and actresses to find look-a-likes and finally settled on James Brolin and Jill Clayburgh. See pics in this column and judge for yourself. The love affair between these two stars ending quite tragically in Carole Lombard's death in '42 in a plane crash is the film's story.

W. C. Fields and Me, which in casual promises is the first of a number of motion pictures about the immortal stars of the '30's, stars Rod Steiger as W. C. and Valerie Perrine, who scored so well in Lenny as his mistress, Carlotta Monti. Arthur Hiller will direct.

From Columbia, Sean Connery, Audrey Hepburn and Robert Shaw top the cast of Richard Lester's **Robin and Marian**, a Sherwood spoof.

The death of Bernard Herrmann, one of the silver screen's great composers who died in his sleep on December 24 at the age of 64, was a great loss to motion pictures. He had literally just completed the score to Martin Scorsese's Columbia Film **Taxi Driver** (see Reviews), and had been preparing to begin work on the music to **The Seven Per Cent Solution**, which has already completed filming.

Herrmann had scored a number of Orson Welles films, most notably **Citizen Kane** and **The Magnificent Ambersons**, as well as creating the music for **The Day The Earth Stood Still** and **The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad** among a host of others too numerous to mention here. However he was most famous for his scores for Hitchcock films, the best of which were **North By Northwest, Vertigo, Marnie** and, of course, **Psycho**. The last was something of a landmark since Herrmann utilized a string orchestra for the entire score to help create the eerie, claustrophobic atmosphere of the film. As an example of how well his creation works, next time the film is on TV turn off the sound during the shower sequence and hear the difference.

Herrmann's death is made ironic by the fact that the symphonic score, of which he was a leading proponent, had been in disfavor in Hollywood for the last several years and was just recently returning to prominence.

Herrmann's score to **Taxi Driver** should—if there is any justice—win him a posthumous Oscar. He won one previously for his music to **All That Money Can Buy**.

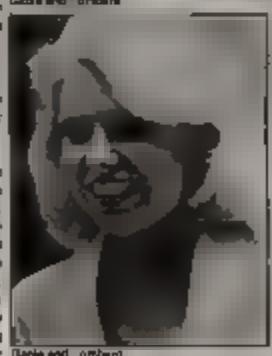
Speaking of Oscars, we thought you'd be amused by this item. Las Vegas oddsmakers, who'll bet on anything and everything, rate **Al Pacino** as favorite to win Best Actor this year for his portrayal in **Dog Day Afternoon**, although, it seems, Jack Nicholson (**One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**) is a close second. Best Actress? Diana Mahogany! Rose is said to be on top, with Ann-Margret an interesting outside chance for her part in **Tommy** (the film, that is).

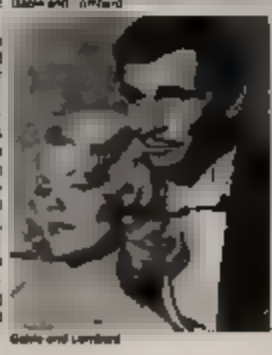
An interesting story is rising

Logan's Run

Logan's Run

Gable and Lombard


Gable and Lombard


Gable and Lombard

Robin and Marian

Robin and Marian

Robin and Marian

Robin and Marian

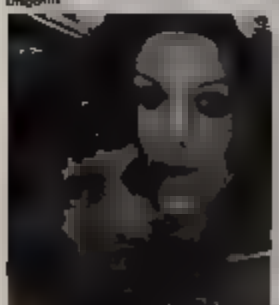
Robin and Marian

A WIDE SCREEN LOOK AT THE SPRING FILM FARE

Taxi Driver

Taxi Driver

Dragonfly


Next Stop Greenwich Village

Next Stop Greenwich Village

around the filming of **A Matter Of Time**, an Italian-American co-production, with American-International distributing the film in this country. We first heard of the project from one of the stars, Liza Minnelli, when we interviewed her almost two years ago. A chat time the script had already been written and she had agreed to do the film. The problem? Well, believe it or not, it was the director who just happens to be her father Vincente Minnelli. Now, while Vincente has had a distinguished directing career beginning with his first film, **Cabin In The Sky**, (Gigi, an Oscar winner), his later work had apparently not been quite so successful. So, even with the proven drawing power of a Liza Minnelli the project had trouble attracting backers.

However that problem is at an end, and it seems as if **A Matter Of Time** is turning out to have all the earmarks of a tour-de-force not only as a comeback for Vincente but as a vehicle for the acting of Liza and her co-star Ingrid Bergman. Liza plays a dual role as a young chambermaid and, in flashback sequences the younger self of a now down-at-the-heels countess Bergman) as she fantasizes about her early life.

We were immediately turned on by the concept of the film as Liza related it to us and couldn't understand why there was any delay in filming it. Watch out for this film. It will probably be a surprise smash later on in the year. And well-deserved, too!

Speaking of American International, they have a film currently in release titled **Dragonfly** which sounds interesting. It stars Beau Bridges and Susan Sarandon in what initially looks to be a love story but which apparently winds up as something for a psychic murder mystery.

20th-Century Fox has a number of new films out led by Paul Mazursky's **Next Stop Greenwich Village**. Mazursky, who brought us **Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice** and **Harry And Tonto** specializes in semi-autobiographical films (he writes as well as directs) have given us a film about an aspiring actor in the early 1950's, who comes to New York to seek his fortune. Billed as a sort of American Graffiti for adults, the film is another solid Mazursky effort with a fine cast of New York actors. Definitely not your typical slick Hollywood flick.

Also from 20th. comes **Will. I Will. For Now** with a fine cast including Elliot Gould and Diane Keaton, who unfortunately get snowed under a slow, unfunny script that attempts to update the kind of sex farces in which Doris Day once starred (remember **Pillow Talk**?).

In the adventure vein, Charlton Heston, Ben Hur, Hestor and James Coburn star in **The Last Hard Man**, a western directed by

Will. I Will. For Now

Will. I Will. For Now

Will. I Will. For Now

Will. I Will. For Now

Will. I Will. For Now

vet Andrew V. McLaglen (he can do em in his sleep, we bet) from a book by Brian Garfield. **Death Wish** Garfield Heston plays a just retired lawman who inadvertantly kills Coburn's wife. Naturally he is a man of revenge, a favorite Garfield topic, and with the towering Heston pitted against the wiley Coburn it's a no-holds-barred, knock-down and drag-out fight.

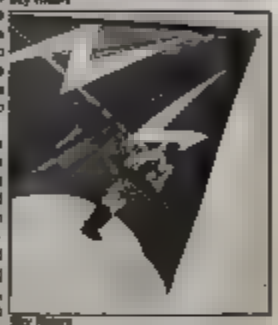
Also on the 20th slate is **Sky Riders**, starring Coburn again, Susannah York and Robert Culp. He's towering too. This one is as they say a fast escape thriller about sky commandos who hang glide their way to glory. By the way in case you've missed the news, hang gliding is the new in sport, so shape up and hang in there.

Murder On The Bridge brings together the formidable talents of John Voight, Jacqueline Bisset, Robert Shaw (resurrected from Jaws), a great Italian character actor Gabriele Ferzetti who Sergio Leone has used in his great westerns including **Once Upon A Time In The West**, and a director returning to acting, Martin Ritt. If that was not confusing enough in itself **Murder** is directed by an actor turned director Maximilian Schell. It's a psychological thriller wherein an aging police commissioner (Ritt) teams up with a young detective (Voight) in order to solve a baffling mystery of two murders somehow linked together over the span of thirty years.

Turning to the much maligned (usually justly so) world of television, some interesting happenings have developed over the course of the season. First the ABC-TV Network, perennially last in the all-important Nielsen ratings (shows stay or are cut from schedules because of these) - and we mean way last - has experienced an amazing turnaround this season - right now they are Number One (CBS was always Number One). There are, in fact, two reasons for this change. **The Six Million Dollar Man**. Whoever said that program execs in TV have carbon-copy minds was dead right. Everything that Superman was to TV in the Fifties, **The $6M Man** is in 76. In fact the show has the largest 8 to 49-year old audience of any show now on Network TV. That's quite a statement. Played by Lee Majors, as if he were a cardboard cutout, the $6M Man is an ex-astronaut who receives cybernetic transplant that give him superhuman powers. Only things missing are Ma & Pa Kent.

Not content to rest on their whatevers ABC-TV knowing a good thing when they see it have rerun **The Bionic Woman** at us. That too has proved tremendously successful. As usual we may be seeing a case of spinoff overkill, which caused a hit show like Batman to leave the air prematurely when it went from once a week to twice.

Sky Riders


Sky Riders

Sky Riders

Sky Riders

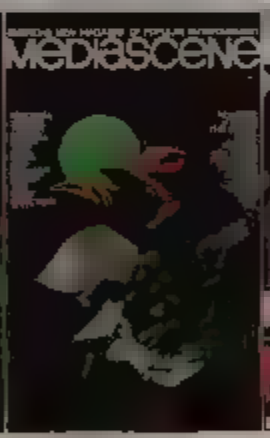
Sky Riders

THE SHADOW KNOWS

That thousands of readers have been clamoring to learn more about the fantastic adventurer—and he's been saying something about it! The Shadow is talking of those who thrilled to his exploits over the years to reveal a top-priority organization called THE SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY. For the first time in over 25 years, the Master of Darkness is opening the rolls so that YOU can become a trusted agent in his cause of justice and honor. As an agent, a special membership kit is waiting for you NOW! In the SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY is exclusively for those who have followed his crusade and kept pace with his battle against the forces of injustice. As a member of the SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY, you'll become a devoted agent in the Shadow's network of operators. As proof, you'll carry a unique midnight-black IDENTIFICATION CARD bearing The Shadow's likeness on one side—and YOUR OWN EXCLUSIVE NUMBERED, PERSONALIZED MEMBERSHIP NUMBER ON THE REVERSE. ● In addition, a SECRET SOCIETY BADGE is in store for purposes of identification is included with every membership kit. Also in the kit—proof of the original artistic Shadow File—key to first and today's. ● A SPECIAL BULLETIN packed with art and articles about events with the hits and features in both art appraising from the pulp and radio adventures of yesterday to the books and films available today. ● BONUS—WHILE THEY LAST, a complete MASTER CHECKLIST of the Shadow's pulp novels with catalog entry data. Make sure you Secret Files of Margot Lane, the Kent Features Writer and Aide along with an appropriate agent to check off each book as it is added to your collection. ● The entire exhilarating kit comes in a SPECIALLY DESIGNED SHADOW ENVELOPE. Moreover, all members are entitled to unique privileges that will further push the activities, features, displays with greatness simply by showing their official ID CARD. ● Membership kits WILL NOT be available to stores or shops anywhere. Subscribe a member of the SHADOW SECRET SOCIETY today! Send $6.00 plus .50 postage and handling—and Burbank will mail your membership kit out immediately!

TWO ADVENTURES NOW IN A SPECIAL PULP-SIZED REPLICA EDITION!

THE SHADOW'S BACK—this time in two of his most baffling and bizarre adventures! Long out of print, these two novels are available now in a single volume, a handsome facsimile edition that recalls the color and excitement of the original pulps. In **The Crime Oracle**, the Master of Darkness battles The Head, a gruesome, disembodied specter whose terrifying presence rules the underworld. In the second thriller **The Shadow** glides through the perilous mazes of Chinatown to pull the fearsome **Teeth of The Dragon.**



ORIGINS OF THE PULP HEROES FEATURED IN MEDIASCENE 14

Revealed at last! The secrets and origins of the greatest crime-fighters of the 30's Pulp Era. Take a penetrating look behind the masks of such mythic crime-crushers as The Shadow, Doc Savage, The Spider, Operator #5, The Phantom Detective, The Avenger and many more. MEDIASCENE14 reveals their inspirational sources. Illustrated with a wealth of original pulp covers in a special pulp-oriented issue, highlighted by a cover and a poster-sized Shadow centerspread by Sjeniko which introduces the Shadow Secret Society.

A PAIR OF VINTAGE SHADOW POSTERS FROM THRILLING 30's

We've just located two of the rarest and most unique items for the Shadow collector—a pair of posters from out of the turbulent 30's. Drawn in the style typical of the era, these striking posters were originally used to promote the master crimefighter's adventures in the pulps, and have long since been lost to the ages. Carefully reproduced on quality stock, these vintage posters are offered here for the first time. Printed in midnight black and crimson red. Use the order form to get yours!

COMPLETE SERIES OF EARLY SHADOW MYSTERIES IN PAPERBACK BOOKS!

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows, and you can too, if you keep up with his latest exploits now available in paperback form. You can get the first six paperbacks for $5.00 and .50 postage and handling. This set contains **The Living Shadow, Hands in the Dark, Molesters on the Spot, The Black Master, Death Zone** and **The Crime Cult**, the greatest ever! A must for all Shadow readers and collectors!

SIX NEW THRILLERS FROM THE SHADOW SERIES AVAILABLE NOW IN PAPERBACK

More fast-paced adventure mapped from the weed of crime! The mysterious master of darkness lurks again in six more exciting paperback thrillers. This second set of Shadow sagas includes **The Red Menace, Mox, The Renegade Jewels, The Silent Seven, The Kings of Crime** and **Shadowed Millions.** Bring your Shadow collection up to date with the latest exploits from the secret files of the pulp's greatest avenger!

AMERICA'S NEW MAGAZINE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

MEDIASCENE

SHADOW OF SHADOW OF

The weed of crime bears bitter fruit! the haunting voice challenged. Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!

The mocking laugh that followed that challenge in sinister echoed in almost every corner of the pop media over three decades ago. The laugh belonged to The Shadow—and if anyone has wondered about the reason for such mirth, may we [illegible] had been clearly defined in the magazine, each successive medium brought about drastic changes—each specifically tailored to fit that particular form.

At the beginning, the pulp Shadow was a disguise used by soldier-of-fortune Kent Allard to battle crime. He utilized the swirling cloak and black slouch hat to blend with the shadows of the night, because night was the time criminals were on the [illegible] to talk with—not to mention save from evil doings and murderous [illegible]. The idea was so good, Margo became a "regular" in almost all The Shadow's adventures, both written, broadcast or viewed.

By viewed, we're referring to The Shadow of the movies. Rod LaRocque and Kane Richmond portrayed the Cranston Shadow in the feature films, while Victor Jory took the part in the serial [illegible] the Golden Age of the Pulps was in its twilight years. The magazines were gradually being dropped from the schedule, others issued less frequently. Gammer felt that comics would again replace the pulps entirely, and set about to build a comic line-up. John Nanovic, then editor of the pulp magazine division, expressed little interest in taking over the books as editor, so Gammer hired William [illegible] 32 pages, but when management offered Walter $10, he accepted. He immediately began turning out 25 pages of comics for The Shadow and for Doc Savage on a monthly basis.

Who could be better suited for the job? Utilizing an endless supply of villains, gimmicks, plots and titles from his pulp tales, Gibson unleashed a barrage of comic (Rollers [illegible]

suggest that he was laughing through his evil-doers and [illegible] statements.

During his reign as Prince of the Pulp Crimefighters, the mysterious manhunter appeared in numerous films, a weekly radio show that spanned over fifteen years, a handful of Big Little Books, newspaper comic strips, a motion picture serial, several paperback and hard-bound books, the pulp magazines themselves and a long-running comic book series.

Like Sherlock Holmes, Tarzan and Superman, The Shadow had the charisma which enabled him to span each of these popular mediums with relative ease—and endure a series of periodical comebacks when the time was right. Unlike the others, however, the premise upon which he was based, and even the very character itself, was subject to change as it evolved through the various incarnations.

The Shadow began as a voice-over announcer who introduced listeners to Street & Smith's Detective Story radio show (see MEDIASCENE 11, 14), took shape as Walter Gibson's pulp creation in 1931, and subsequently developed into a [illegible] and film property in the [illegible] paper.

Radio took the character a step further and made him invisible.

The change was probably suited to the medium. More believable and had a sense of radio listeners acting as The Shadow went through his paces. Youngsters imagined the eerie avenger standing in their dark darkened living rooms, while their parents did the same but never admitted it. This time, the alter ego of Kent Allard was eliminated and replaced permanently by Lamont Cranston. Whenever Cranston became The Shadow, his voice was piped through a filter microphone (something not unlike an echo chamber), a device which let listeners know the lead actor was at hand.

In addition to giving The Shadow the "ability to cloud men's minds so that they could not see him," radio writers (which included Max Ehrlich, Frank Kane and Alfred Bester) bestowed upon him "his faithful friend and companion, Margo Lane," perhaps in tribute for eliminating most of the Shadow's many agents. Margo was a necessity, of course, especially on the radio, where she gave the [illegible]

version. All of them reverted back to the original man in black pulp Shadow, and unfortunately turned the character into a gun-toting detective created in a [illegible] manner.

Variations manifested themselves in other different media, but one of the most interesting appeared in the Shadow comics.

It was bound to happen, of course—The Shadow was a natural for the new four-color medium. "I wanted to do the comics," Walter Gibson recalls, "because I'd worked at the Ledger Syndicate and already liked the form." He had urged the editors at Street & Smith to develop a comic book line soon after the boom created by the Superman.

The genesis of the S&S comic line begins with the personage of Allen Gammer, who headed the financial end of the Curtis Publishing Company through the invention of a quick-drying system of printing, which was used by Curtis. When Grammer left his post at Curtis to become president of Street & Smith, he began to initiate a number of changes, which included eliminating company-owned printing plants and creating new formats for their properties.

[illegible] Delacorte to handle the job.

Since The Shadow was S&S's premiere property, a book was immediately scheduled using the character. Vernon Greene, then busy working on bringing The Shadow to the newspapers, was selected to illustrate the [illegible] avenger. The problem remained as to how to present The Shadow to the juvenile readership. Various possibilities were discussed, including making him an invisible hero. Then the art department found the solution—as others in the radio formula Shadow who could "cloud men's minds."

His invisibility was produced through the use of a lightning visual effect which showed the crimefighter in ethereal tones of blue, without an inked black line to support him realistically. By virtue of this treatment alone, the strip was elevated to breakthrough level. The first Shadow comic appeared in March 1940. An old pulp painting doubled as its cover.

Though the first issue of Shadow Comics was not written by Walter Gibson, he was hired to write the plotlines. Gibson felt he should receive a residual for the comic book Shadow as its creator, and offered to script the series in addition to the pulps [illegible]

Shadow addicts were delighted, perhaps too much, because by April 1943, the pulp magazine went from bi-weekly to monthly. During this period, Walter had also developed a Shadow syndicated comic strip which came to a sudden end due to the war's paper shortage.

The Shadow's comic incidents were fewer than his pulp doings. One of the more interesting ones would surface when S&S received a notice from the Bell Syndicate threatening a lawsuit unless Shadow Comics immediately ceased featuring one of their comic characters. The character in question was called Valda, a hell-raising, beautiful-haired [illegible] through the Shadow's adventures in a [illegible] and showed [illegible]. The Bell Syndicate claimed that Valda was a copy of their [illegible], and that further violations would lead to legal action. The editors confronted Gibson with the accusation. He answered, "Let 'em sue!" He then proceeded to produce an armful of syndicated Shadow strips which ran several years earlier, and were used as reprint material in Shadow Comics. The original Shadow strips had run the [illegible]

THE COMICS

Fury "[illegible]." The Bell Syndicate dropped their charges.

Gibson continued to write the Shadow's pulp adventures until March 1949 when he quit because of contractual differences. Street & Smith had drawn up a new agreement which demanded Gibson release all rights to The Shadow. He declined, insisting the terms of the original contract be kept, terms which specified him as the

1947 to September 1949 when after Bob Powell took over the series. Powell had launched his comic career in the Eisner and Iger shop with strips like Sheena and Spy Ace and the Red Squadron for the Fiction House line.

Not long afterward, he graduated to the Mr. Mystic strip in the Spirit Comic Supplement. Mr. Mystic, Caped [illegible] in turban and cloak, filled his five pages

[illegible] shadows! But it's quite necessary, as one look at his face is [illegible] You see—I'm dead!"

Powell worked on various strips until he finally landed The Shadow, a series that would undoubtedly become the outstanding achievement of his career. What Barnum was to Roy Kane and Captain America to Jack Kirby, The Shadow would be to Powell. Any number of

[illegible] compositions. His unusual use of space, especially in his early work, was unconventionally unbalanced. Facing page [illegible] was that of the old school of comics, [illegible] anti-[illegible].

These were, of course, all elements which contributed to The Shadow's success. Where Kirby was a [illegible] and a [illegible], Powell [illegible] humanity in the daylight, reveal-

the [illegible] version [illegible] [illegible] color. Margo appeared in [illegible] [illegible] Powell [illegible] [illegible] Shrevvy, the Shadow's cab driver, was the only agent featured in the [illegible], while Commissioner [illegible] [illegible] for Lee [illegible] handled most of the police action.

Each comic ran one or two Shadow thrillers per issue, [illegible]

Shadow's creator and entitled him to his rights. He dropped his pulp stories, but continued to script the strips for [illegible] afterward.

When Walter Gibson quit, to save the strip in 1949, a replacement had to be found — [illegible] and the strip [illegible]. The Philadelphia Ledger was [illegible] Powell's shop, which included the art department that worked on [illegible] [illegible]. Brilliantly persuaded them to switch to S&S and [illegible] to set up a "[illegible]" shop in Philadelphia. Charlie Cox, who took over The Shadow, directed the story, which included Jerry Robinson, Russell Hamilton and Ted O'Loughlin.

Gibson's Shadow, which might be considered the yellow sweetener by today's standards, was adequate for the period. His style was [illegible], certainly, [illegible] to register any real creative impact on the reader. What it lacked in [illegible], however, it often made up for in movement. Unfortunately, much [illegible] for Charlie Coll, whose greater [illegible] the [illegible] that he met his deadlines on the Shadow for the next two years.

Nonetheless, The Shadow was to reach a dramatic peak during [illegible]

with [illegible] more supernatural than magical. In a [illegible] of skulls, [illegible] candles, ancient [illegible] and dark [illegible], he [illegible] the [illegible] Shadow [illegible] itself. Over the years, Powell would be [illegible] again and again to the bizarre and fantastic type of [illegible].

Powell's super hero work in the 40's was [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and Captain [illegible], his contributions to Speed Comics, were [illegible] [illegible]. He seemed strangely [illegible] [illegible] heroes. His style [illegible] from the [illegible] pow style of Kirby or the engaging simplicity of [illegible].

Humor appealed to Powell more than the [illegible] [illegible] of the super hero, and he told it in [illegible] in Harvey's Green Hornet, Black Cat, The Scarlet Arrow, Blonde Bomber, The Flyin' Fool and Spirit of '76. His Man In Black was another foray entirely—a [illegible] fantasy to which the fates, in the guise of gods, goddesses and imps, intervened in the life [illegible] of [illegible] humans.

The Man In Black always introduced himself from the splash: "Good evening, I am Mr. Twilight, your storyteller. Before [illegible]

[illegible] contributed to the success of this particular strip, none the least of which was his [illegible] work on Mr. Mystic and Man In Black (both of which were something of The Shadow). It was simply a matter of the right man in the right place at the right time in his career.

The [illegible] of Kirby and Kane, Powell [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] distortion. His stories were generally [illegible] in realism, compared to the [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] comic book [illegible]. Instead, Powell's approach was [illegible].

It was undoubtedly this aspect of his style that kept the Shadow [illegible] [illegible] into the foreground of [illegible] art. That Powell never tried to be anyone but himself must be to his credit. His drawing was [illegible] of his contemporaries. He [illegible] the use of a pen, instead inked everything from faces to backgrounds with a number three sable brush. Superficially resembling the Caniff/Caniff school, its [illegible], the warmth and [illegible] they possessed. Powell had an [illegible] style, distant [illegible] for his knowledgeable, good [illegible] [illegible]

ing all-[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] excellent in "delineating the [illegible], [illegible] and the jubilantly ugly. He did, in fact, seem to have difficulty drawing handsome men and beautiful women, and [illegible] figures.

Powell's [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] The Shadow into the whirlpool atmosphere that [illegible] [illegible] had provided. Readers knew The Shadow's world was a surreal landscape of gunmen and ghouls, [illegible] and [illegible] death.

Storywise, The Shadow ranks in first place as the outstanding mystery/detective strip of all time. Sometimes stories were adapted from the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of Gibson or Bruce Elliott. Mysteries revolved around [illegible] magic [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the tradition of detective fiction. [illegible] were [illegible] with appropriate clues, [illegible] with red herrings and [illegible] giving the reader a chance to solve the mystery himself.

In the comics, The Shadow [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] that [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] so [illegible] in the Dark, The Jekyll-Hyde Murders, The Stolen Shadow, The Black [illegible], Judge Lawless, [illegible] of Death, [illegible] From the Grave, Murder Through the Looking Glass, [illegible] [illegible] and Spider Boy.

The final issue of Shadow Comics was dated August-September 1949, a time which also signaled the discontinuation of the pulp magazine. Two revivals were [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Comics [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the 60's, and National's [illegible] attempt in the 70's, [illegible] [illegible] and a failure to understand the character of The Shadow by the revival's producers resulted in its [illegible] lack of success.

There are those who contend that The Shadow belongs to the 30's and 40's. They might be right, but we're inclined to think the spirit is still in the [illegible]—and the current paperback revival tends to prove out the point.

The Shadow will return. It's only a matter of time before his [illegible] challenge again echoes in the corridors of the comic world.

[illegible]

Mediascene

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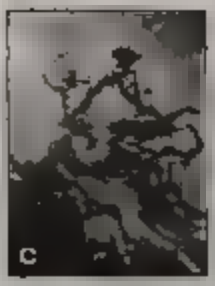
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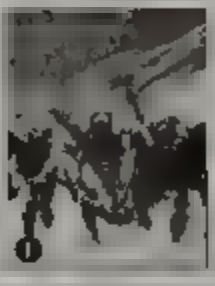
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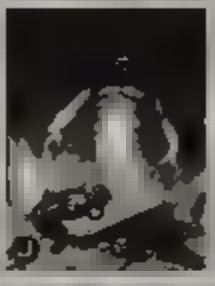
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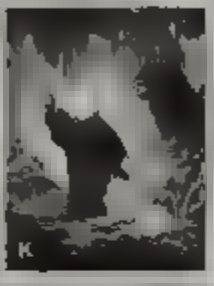
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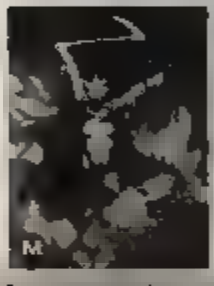
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JOHNNY COMET

THE 50 RAREST PULPS

In offering a pictorial review of **The 50 Rarest Pulps**, we realize the selection of material is strictly arbitrary in discussing the feature with the top collectors in the country it was generally agreed that most of the books pictured here must be somewhere on that list.

Perhaps we would have been more accurate calling this review "50 of the Rarest Pulps Available" although that title seems to leave something to be desired too. In any case, the feature should do exactly what we hoped it would do- entertain, inform and stimulate an interest in the pulp field.

The books pictured here were selected for a number of reasons: their desirability among collectors, their current price, and their actual rarity on the market. To our particular knowledge, no attempt has ever been made to structure such a listing.

The prices quoted here refer to books in excellent condition and were suggested by Dave Alexander and Terry Stroud of The American Comic Book Company in California, where many of them were photographed. Others who helped in the selection and search of these books include Fred Cook, Captain J. R. Devery, Joe Goggin, Nils Hardin, George Hocutt, Sam Jason, Dan Kuhn, Ernest Toth, and Bob Weinberg. A tip of the sleuth hat for their help and the use of their collections.

Some titles like **Fire Fighters, New York Stories, Courtroom Stories, Lucky Stories, Harlem Stories, Speakeasy Stories, Gun Wielders** and **Sky High Library** were not included because of space limitations. Others such as **Pride All Pro Stories, Hardboiled, Five-cent Flying Stories, Movie Detective, The Forgotten Men, Strange Suicides** and **Medical Heroes** are not in existence because we know of no copies which exist in the collections available to us. And there are undoubtedly no copies. And there are undoubtedly dozens of pulps which have escaped the notice of all collectors.

1—ASTOUNDING STORIES
No. 1 Jan 1930—first published by Clayton as a book of SEM thrillers. It was taken over by Street & Smith in 1933 and turned into an adult SF magazine. A pulp classic. $250

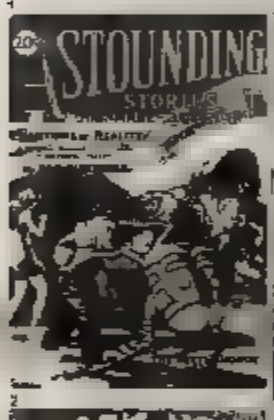
2- BLACK HOOD
Vol. 2 No. 8— This Sep 1941 offering from Columbia Publications is really the first issue of this title which featured one of the few comic book characters to switch to the pulps; the remaining two issues were titled **Hooded Detective**. $100

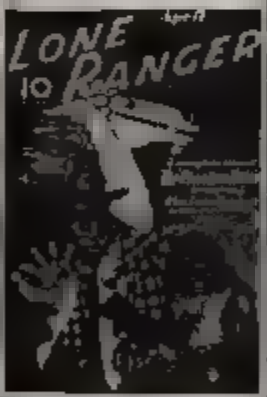
3— BLUE STEEL
No. — Mar 1932— released by Popular Publications, this extremely rare pulp is designated as Vol. 1 No. 2 inside, just having changed its title from **Dare-devil**, then after a few issues changed back. $80.

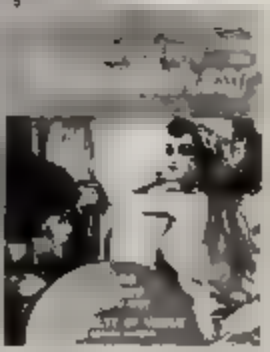
4- BUCK JONES
No. — Nov 1936- based on the western film star, this book was issued by Dell Publications as a one-shot. $55

5- CAPTAIN SATAN
No. 1 Mar 1938— one of Popular Publications short run heroes which was released on a monthly basis until July 1938. Interesting collectors item. $75

6- CIVIL WAR STORIES
No. — Spring 1940—one of the dozens of short run specialty pulps published as a one-shot by Fiction House Magazines. Note the sentimental vignette of a Southern Belle in the gunsmoke







at the upper right corner. $85.

7—DR. DEATH

No. 1 Feb 1935—the classic villain pulp whose lead character originally appeared in Dell Publications All-Detective in Aug and Sep of 1934 and Jan 1935 when the title was changed to Dr. Death And lasted three issues $150

8—FAME AND FORTUNE

Vol. 25, No 4—this is the famous Feb 1929 issue which features The Shadow of Wall Street," which some claim is the prototype story for The Shadow series Street & Smith ran 17 issues before they changed the title to Fortune in July 1929 $300

9—FLASH GORDON

No Dec 1936—based on the famous comic strip character this D.J H Publication had but a single issue with the lead tale written by James E. Northfield. Fred Meagher illustrated the cover in the Alex Raymond style in addition to four full-page full-color interiors $160.

10—HORROR STORIES

No 1 Jan 1935—few pulps outdid this title for weird spine-tingers which Popular Publications released until May 1941 $150. with others averaging about $50

11—LONE RANGER

No Apr 1937—the swinging masked rider of the plains appeared in eight issues of his own book from Trojan Publishing Corporation. Note the sporty checkered vest and the fact that Tonto was billed beneath Silver the wonder horse $100.

12—MAGIC CARPET

Vol. 3, No 4—this pulp was a retitling of Popular's Oriental Stories and ran for five issues from Jan 1933 to Jan 1934. About $80. issues with R. E. Howard stories $100.

13—MIRACLE

No Apr 1931—one of the earliest SF magazines, produced by Harvey Publications $125.

14—MODERN ADVENTURES

No 1 Mar 1937—an unusual exotic adventure pulp from Associated Authors Inc. Note feature story "The Penalty of Virtue." $90.

15—MOVIE ACTION

Mar 1936—a Street & Smith magazine tenuously tied in to the film world This issue features the Clyde Beatty serial "Darkest Africa." $85.

16—MYSTERY ADVENTURE

Nov 935—a highly collectible pulp published by Fiction Magazines Inc. featuring the adventures of the Domino Lady $100

17—MYSTERY ADVENTURE

Jun 1936—this title ran from January 1935 to December 1939 when it became Mystery Adventures. This issue starred Zenith Rand Planet Vigilante. $75.

18—MYSTERY TALES

Sep 1939—Red Circle Publication which began in March 1938 and featured fun entertainment such as the legless man and the twin sideshow dwarfs shown flirting their charm for the amusement of the sweet young thing on the floor $60

19—OCTOPUS

No 1 Feb 1936—Popular Publications' fantastic one-shot villain pulp which pre-dates (and is allegorical to) the upcoming war similar to Carnac The Magnificent. $200.

20—ORIENTAL STORIES

No 1 Oct 1930—produced by Popular Publications this title featured many of the same writers who contributed to Weird Tales. $170

21 ORIENTAL STORIES

Spring 1932—this title, which

A COLLECTOR'S SELECTION OF THE MOST UNIQUE PULP MAGAZINES EVER ASSEMBLED

presented strange and bizarre tales from the East. Ran for nine issues until January 1953 ($40). St John covers and R E Howard stories (4s this one for $100.

23—**POPULAR ENGINEERING**
Apr 1930—though designated Vol.1 No. 2, this pulp is a first issue—and most probably the only issue of its title published by Magazine and Book Corp. $75.

23—**PRISON STORIES**
May 1931 -this Hersey publication ran for about six issues beginning in November 1930. The hinges are actually painted on the cover. $50

24—**RED STAR MYSTERY**
No 1 Jun 1940—Red Circle publication which ran for five issues and featured the macabre exploits of Don Diavolo, The Scarlet Wizard. $80 with the remaining issues at $40

25—**SAUCY MOVIE TALES**
Jan 1958— published by Movie Digest Inc. (who sometimes left their credit off the title page completely) this issue is almost topical with its naked girl and naked shark. $75

26- **SAUCY MOVIE TALES**
Sep 1936- another for the serious collector! A kinky historical cover on a title which ran about 5 issues. Very rare. $75

27- **SAUCY ROMANTIC ADVENTURES**
May 1936- this first issue is a real specialty item for collectors because it featured the adventures of the Domino Lady one of the few female crimefighters, none of whom ever really caught on. $125

28—**SECRET SERVICE**
Apr 1928—an interesting and early spy pulp published by Curwood for at least a ten-issue run beginning in Nov 1927. $40.

29- **THE SECRET SIX**
Jan 1935— the fourth, final and rarest issue of this title published by Popular which detailed the exploits of a group of crimefighters. $100. The first issue is considerably more common and sells for $125

30- **SCARLET ADVENTURESS**
Feb 1936—the continuation of **Modern Adventures** indicating a slightly more sensational approach. Oftbeat title. $80

31—**SCORPION**
No. 1 Apr 1939—another classic one-shot villain pulp from Popular Publications, which was really a retitled and rewritten Octopus thriller. $200

32- **THE SHADOW**
No. 1 Apr 931 -one of the rarest and most desirable of all pulps, published by Street & Smith- the first of 325 issues which ran until Summer 1949. $600.

33- **SINISTER STORIES**
No 1 Feb 1940—published by Fictioneers, Inc.. this is the first of a very scarce run of three issues which featured weird and bizarre mystery fiction. $125.

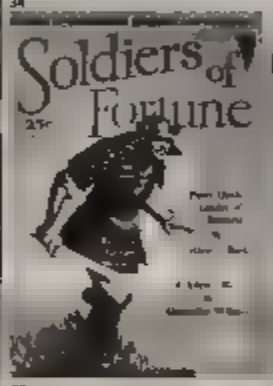
34- **SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE**
No 3, Feb 1932—Clayton Magazine which premiered in Oct 1931 and ran for about four issues, all of which offered fast-moving tales of action and adventure. $60

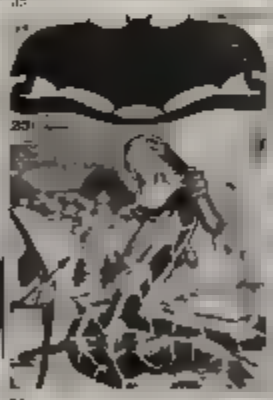
35—**STRANGE TALES**
No Sep 932- Clayton Magazine patterned after Weird Tales, with a seven-issue bi-monthly run until January 933. $150 -Others about $65

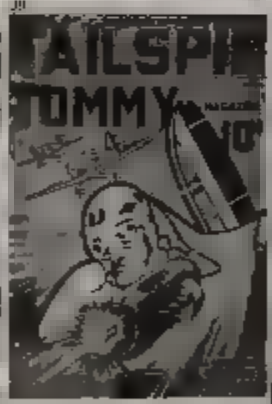
36—**SUBMARINE STORIES**
May 1930—another genre book from Dell Publications which ran for 3 issues from Apr 1929 to Sep 1930. $35

37- **TALES OF MAGIC AND MYSTERY**
No. 1- the first of five issues

THE 50 RAREST PULPS







about magic mentalism and magicians beginning in December 1927 and published by Personal Arts Co. $125

38—TAILSPIN TOMMY

No 1 Oct 1936· C.L.H Publication based on the comic strip adventures of the flying hero. Dan Dunn and Don Winslow were also released in similar formats $50

39—THRILL BOOK

No 1 Mar 1 1919—one of the rarest and most sought after titles among top pulp collectors. published by Street & Smith An anthology type magazine, it ran for 16 issues until October 1919. and allegedly was distributed only on the East Coast $600.

40—THRILL BOOK

Sep 15 1919—an example of the pulp-sized editions; the first eight issues were unrelated magazines saddle-stitched the remaining eight were in regular pulp format $425

41· UNDERWORLD ROMANCES

No 1 Nov 1931· ·offbeat Popular Publication. the first of three monthly issues, collected only by the most ardent pulpsters $100

42· VAMPIRES

No 1 Jun 927—blood-sucking fiends. forget it This was women's lib fifty years ahead of time The female on the cover stood arrogantly over the cringing male. a whip clutched in her hand, underscoring the theme of female dominance. Note the cover blurb "The Man Pays." $150

43—WEIRD TALES

No 1 May 1923· the Number 1 pulp in any collection! The first and foremost of the weird fantasy and horror magazines—a few of these and you don't need any others $1,000

44· WEIRD TALES

No 2 Apr 1923· ·early issues are among the most difficult to find, and the most expensive This is probably the scarcest issue of the first several years. with the November 1924 number being a close second. $800

45—WEIRD TALES

No 3. May 1923· ·the first eleven issues of this title were oversized saddle-stitched magazines. This issue is currently priced at $400. the rest about $300

46—THE WHISPERER

No 1 Oct 1936· Street & Smith's own copy of The Shadow which ran for 4 issues until December 1937 then became a back-up feature in Crimebusters and The Shadow for 33 additional tales. $50

47 WITCH'S TALES

No 1 Nov 1936—Centaur Publications attempt to cash in on the radio show of the same name The only two issues were produced in tabloid-size format and featured authors no one ever heard of $100

48· WU FANG

No 1 Dec 935· an exception-ally collectible pulp written in the Fu Manchu vein. This Popular magazine ran for seven issues beginning in September 1935. The first issue is the most common $150 The others more difficult to find $80.

49· YEN SIN

No 2. Jun 936· this title took up where Wu Fang left off, and lasted for three issues, all of which are rarer than its predecessor First issue. $150, with the others at $100

50· ZEPPELIN STORIES

No 3. May 935—certainly one of the most oddball titles ever created Published by Fiction Publications the series lasted for four flights before it was grounded $125

A COLLECTOR'S SELECTION OF THE MOST UNIQUE PULP MAGAZINES EVER ASSEMBLED

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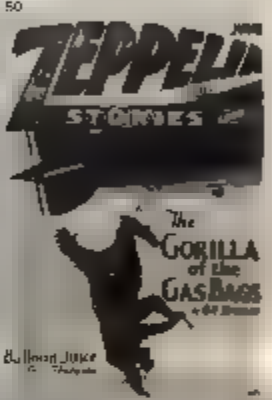

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THE SHADOW

01-THE SHADOW (1945)
Side A Strike Out
Side B One Dead and Two to Go

02-THE SHADOW (1946)
Side A Blood Money
Side B Valley of Living Terror

03-THE SHADOW (1947)
Side A Curse of the Gypsies
Side B Phantom of the Lighthouse

04-THE SHADOW (1947-48)
Side A Reflections of Death
Side B When the Grave is Open

05-THE SHADOW (1947)
Side A Ghosts Can Kill
Side B Shadow of Suspicion

06-THE SHADOW (1947)
Side A Death Rides High
Side B Shadow's Revenge

07-THE SHADOW (1946-47)
Side A The Devil Takes a Wife
Side B Dream of Death

08-THE SHADOW (1948)
Side A Bones of the Dragon
Side B Giant of Madras

09-THE SHADOW (1948)
Side A The Thing in the Cage
Side B Isle of the Living Dead

10-THE SHADOW (1938)
Side A The Creeper
Side B Power of the Mind

11-THE SHADOW (1938)
Side A Twist with the Broken Voice
Side B Death from the Deep

12-THE SHADOW (1940)
Side A The Plot that Failed
Side B Black Kack

13-THE SHADOW (1938)
Side A Tomb of Terror
Side B Silent Avenger

14-THE SHADOW (1940)
Side A Sinister Payoff
Side B Mark of the Black Widow

15-THE SHADOW (1938)
Side A The Phantom Voice
Side B Bride of Death

CRIME DRAMA

21-THE WHISTLER (1945)
Side A Sweetface
Side B Quiet Soldier

22-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1943)
Side A Great Gondolfo
Side B Manor House Case

23-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1945)
Side A Gunpowder Plot
Side B The Speckled Band

24-SHERLOCK HOLMES: RATHBONE (1939)
Side A Missing Submarine Plans
Side B Scandal in Bohemia

25-MERCURY THEATER: WELLES (1938)
Side A Sherlock Holmes
Side B Sherlock Holmes Conclusion

26-MERCURY THEATER: WELLES (1938)
Side A Dracula Part I
Side B Dracula Part II

27-SAM SPADE (1947-48)
Side A Bow Window Caper
Side B Dry Martini Caper

28-SHADOW OF FU MANCHU (1939's)
Side A Chapters and 2
Side B Chapters 3 and 4

29-SHADOW OF FU MANCHU (1939's)
Side A Chapters 5 and 6
Side B Chapters 7 and 8

MAGICIAN HEROES

30-BLACKSTONE 1943)
Side A Death Defying Death Curse of Kali
Side B Death in the Crystal Knife from the Dark

31-CARNAC, THE MAGICIAN (1943)
Side A Chapters 1 and 2
Side B Chapters 3 and 4

ADVENTURE HEROES

33-CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT (1940, 41 & 42)
Side A Origin of Cap and Secret Squadron
Side B Iron Shark and French Commandos

33-BUCK ROGERS (1939)
Side A Chapters and 2
Side B Programs 3 and 4

34-LONE RANGER (1938)
Side A Big Baldy Mine
Side B El Diablo and the Preacher

35-GREEN HORNET (1939 & 46)
Side A Parking of Shakedowns
Side B Escape For Revenge

MYSTERY

36-SUSPENSE: JAMES CAGNEY (1948)
Side A Love's Lovely Counterfeit
Side B Confession

37-SUSPENSE 1945-46)
Side A House in Cypress Canyon
Side B Drury's Bones. Kartoff

38-LIGHTS OUT (1938 & 43)
Side A Cat Wife. Karloff
Side B Sub-Basement Monster

SCIENCE FICTION

39-TOM CORBETT (1952)
Side A Greatest Show in Universe
Side B Greatest Show in Universe II

40-SPACE PATROL (1950)
Side A Monster from the Past
Side B Watchman of Wormok

41-2000 PLUS (1950)
Side A When World's Meet
Side B Flying Saucers

SAMPLERS

42-SUPERHERO SAMPLER 1940-43)
Side A Black Hood. Black Castle
Side B 1st Blue Beetle

43-WESTERN SAMPLER (1937-47)
Side A Buck Jones. Gene Autry
Side B Tennessee Jed. Tom Mix

44-AVIATION SAMPLER (1938-47)
Side A Flash Gordon. Hop Harrigan
Side B Sky Kings Smilin Jack

45-DETECTIVE SAMPLER 1940-44)
Side A Charlie Chan/Chick Carter Boy Detective
Side B Don Dunn. Dick Tracy

46-MAGIC SAMPLER (1933-47)
Side A Magic Island/Mandrake
Side B Moon over Africa. Omar the Wizard

COMEDY

47-ABBOTT AND COSTELLO (1944)
Side A Who's on First
Side B Into the future

48-ABBOTT AND JOSTELLO (1944 & 52)
Side A Andy Buys a Pet
Side B 0,000th Anniversary

49-FRED ALLEN (1948)
Side A Pamela and James Mason
Side B Basil Rathbone

50-JACK BENNY (1942 & 47)
Side A Losing at racetrack
Side B Fred Allen as Uncle Sam

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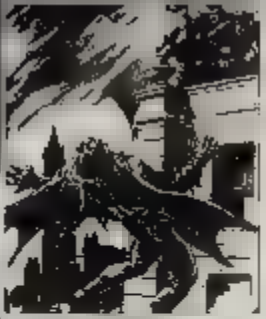
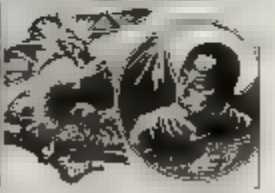


PART TWO:
TRACING THE ORIGINS OF THE GREAT PULP HEROES



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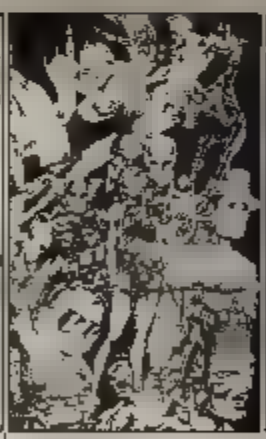

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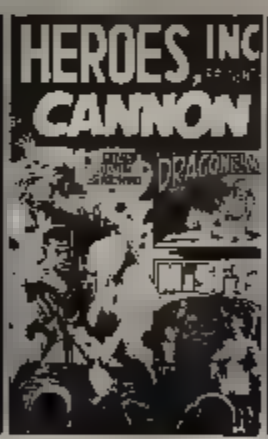

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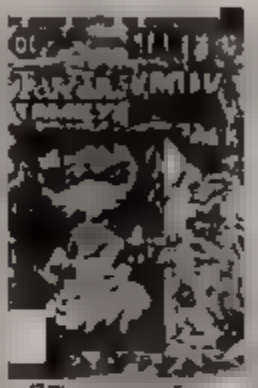
Carmine Infantino has (a) quit (b) left National through mutual consent or been fired.

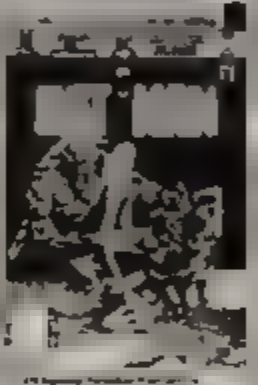
Depending on who's talking all three of the above are being offered as explanations.

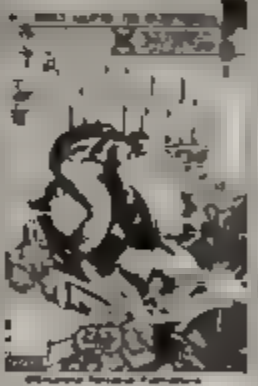
Supporting choice (a) are several National employees who apparently hoped Infantino was lying about moving to California to work in the Hanna-Barbera animation studios, a week or two before his departure took place. We found no evidence to support this development.

Choice (b) is the version being offered by Warner Communications for obvious public relations reasons.

But choice (c) is closer to the raw truth as described by an upper echelon DC employee







who told us: "Carmine's been on the shelf for a year. He's been sitting around the office and doing nothing. He's been a real pain in the ass. He's been bitching and moaning about not getting a book. He's been a real problem around here."

Infantino's departure was announced by Warner Communications Chairman Steve Ross. The exchange between Ross and Carmine was brief and the result was that either Infantino arranged he had been given $100 K to leave the job and the building.

We were told that Carmine was visibly shaken by the experience. "He looked like he'd been hit with a sledgehammer." Another source described him as "pale as a ghost."

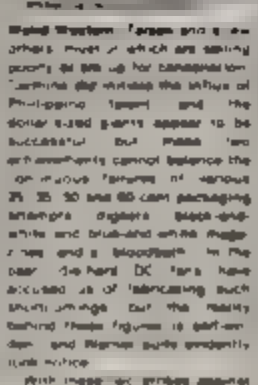
Apparently Infantino did not know that the corporate axe was going to fall with such grim finality which is strange since we had heard about the plans for dismissal and who would handle the job as far back as December. Perhaps it was the abruptness of the dismissal that rocked Carmine, allowing him barely enough time to clear his desk and no time to arrange for a new job.

The reasons for Carmine's discharge were two-fold: there were both too many personality clashes with top Warner people, most in addition to conflicts with many of his own employees, and he was paying National money down the drain with his poor business judgement year after year.

Unlike Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, Carmine does not command a loyal, if cultish, following. Popular with fans he certainly is not. Many professionals grimace when telling stories about Carmine's temper tantrums, his ego and his inability to deal with people. Carmine has been known to throw things at employees, to scream at them and to generally act like a spoiled child. Many of his own employees have left DC because they could not stand working for him.

Carmine's personality problems have been compounded by his inability to produce. Carmine has not had a hit book in years. Even his Spectre, which was a critical success, was a commercial failure. Carmine's books have been poorly edited, poorly written and poorly drawn. Carmine has been unable to attract and hold talent. Carmine's books have been poorly distributed and poorly promoted.

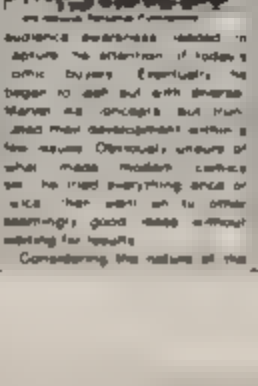
On the business side the facts speak for themselves. Without indepth research into the comic titles and not counting many lows and humor books are found approximately 60 titles and series started by Infantino which bit the dust/cut during his 7½ year reign while 13 previously established mags/titles also flopped. On the plus side are BLOOD Kamandi Swamp Thing Unknown Soldier

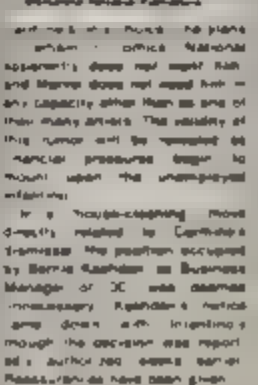


Weird Western Tales and a few others most of which are selling poorly at best for consolation. Carmine did initiate the influx of Philippine talent and the dollar-a-page giants appear to be successful but these two achievements cannot balance the ongoing failures of various 25 35 50 and 60 cent packaging attempts digests giant-size white and blue-and-white magazines and a bloodbath. In the past 18 hard DC fans have accused us of fabricating such shaky charges but the reality behind these figures is seldom seen and Warner suits evidently took notice.

With these six strikes against him and DC's matter of time before Infantino was fired and that is occurred on the heels of the Superman vs Siegel and Shuster controversy was only a coincidence.

When the proxy battle boiled down to a test despite his well known and respected stature as a great comic artist and storyteller Infantino was a failure as an Executive Director President Publisher. He lacked the common touch the audience awareness needed to capture the attention of today's comic buyers. Eventually he began to clash not with diverse Warner Ad Agency but with Jack Liebowitz, Warner's Chairman of the Executive Committee and Steve Ross, Chairman of the Board. Liebowitz and Ross have been with Warner's since the days when Warner's was a movie studio and they have been involved with DC since the days when DC was a publishing company. Liebowitz and Ross have been involved with DC since the days when DC was a publishing company. Liebowitz and Ross have been involved with DC since the days when DC was a publishing company.





COMIXSCENE

Harrison called and invited us to visit the offices. Sol has always maintained the most cordial of contacts with us even while walking the tightrope of company loyalty. We, in turn, fully support Harrison's appointment to National's top position, and quite honestly feel he's the right man for the job. His business and production background are second to none, his staff of editors are among the best, and his ideas can be as imaginative as necessary to get the job done.

We look forward to renewing our official contact with National, and to being able to mutually cooperate with DC so that we may feature the news in its most complete form. As usual, we will continue to present all the news, good and bad, from all the companies. The increased contact with National will naturally lead to additional items personal stories and new developments which will inevitably bring about a balance to our COMIXSCENE columns. You'll continue to get the best coverage of the comic world here first!

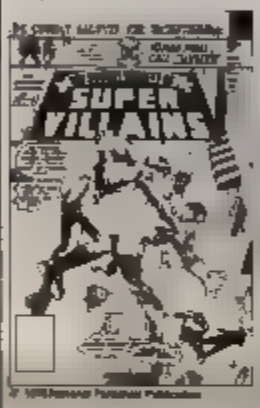
Harrison's first official policy actions are, for the time being, devoted to stabilizing schedules, and allowing books a decent try-out period instead of cutting them after 2 or 3 issues. Artists and writers are being given new assignments to see if their talents may be better utilized, and the exploration for new ideas is being intensified.

One rumor did arise soon after Carmine's leaving, about cutting back still further in the superhero and mystery lines, and starting a new line of kiddie comic titles, but it was uniformly denied. It would be in direct opposition to the projects currently in the works," said one editor. "Absolutely not," Nelson Bridwell confirmed.

Another sensational rumor had Denny O'Neil and Elliot Maggin fired at National and Mary Wolfman, Steve Gerber and Don McGregor discharged from Marvel. The entire story was false, and particularly distasteful because Denny O'Neil was only spending time in the hospital for an old Navy injury while his solo title, **Kung-Fu Fighter**, dropped back to a bi-monthly schedule.

Now back at the offices. Denny is looking for a few new book ideas, and writing as usual.

Matters progress slowly but surely on the upcoming Superman film, and an inside source reveals that the only thing preventing the announcement of Burt Reynolds in the key role is the formal contract signing. Charlton Heston has reportedly been signed to appear in Superman in a cameo part as Superman's father Jor-El. A similar guest appearance by Elizabeth Taylor has also been reported casting her in the role of Lara, wife of Jor-El Heston. When the deals are sewn up, another wave of publicity will be unleashed in print and TV. NBC

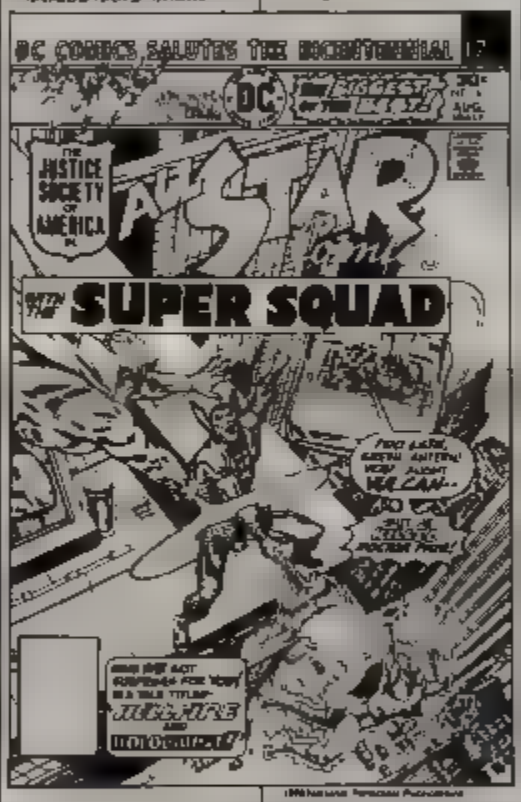


is a Warner outfit.

Mario Puzo has dropped out of the picture as per his contract, after providing the original story and two drafts of the screenplay. The writers of the Broadway **Superman** play have been hired to take over the scripting, and immediately called DC to question whether Superman (a Kryptonian) could have sex with an Earthling (Lois Lane). This apparently was an important point in Puzo's plot but since National has a voice in approving the shooting script don't look for hard core action in the film, anymore than one can expect to find serious drama in long underwear.

Warner and the movie's producer Ilya Salkind, do not feel that the Man of Steel's bout with Siegel and Shuster will have any affect on the project's 77 78 release. In fact the notoriety probably helped in the publicity build-up, and the $40,000 a year settlement vindicates them of any possible charges of callousness. The two creators will probably even shill for the upcoming film since they have already made up with Warner sufficiently to appear at the February DC comics convention.

In his monthly four-color comic, **Superman** is undergoing an artistic face lift as Jose Luis Garcia Lopez and Dick Giordano team on a Gerry Conway scripted tale. Curt Swan is not being permanently replaced though he is merely being given an opportunity to work on other projects. This will not only give Curt a change from his too-long monopolized schedule, but also



allow different artists a chance to show what new tricks they can bring to the Man of Steel.

Following his special 300th issue (**Superman** 300?), the costumed Kryptonian will have a run-in with Solomon Grundy written by Gerry Conway and then go super-psycho Stricken with acute paranoia over the possibility of another Krypton disaster on Earth, Superman becomes so protective that he begins to seriously annoy Supergirl and the entire population of the planet. Again written by Conway, this sequence will eventually involve Kandor, mutants and a cosmic deception. All this, and a somewhat more fulfilling romantic life in the

months ahead.

Action is reportedly undergoing a policy change so that it can feature tales relating to the various supporting characters from the Superman stories in the back-up feature slot.

Give and take is the name of the comics game when the stands are already bursting at the seams, and one victim of this rule is Jonah Hex's stomping grounds **Weird Western Tales**. Sales were always marginal on this book, and the time had come for it to go. **Swamp Thing**, **PLOP!** and **Unknown Soldier** are in similar situations, but instead of cancellations, changes are being made in the make-up. **Swamp Thing**, which has steadi-

ly slipped since its Wrightson-Weir days, gets a new logo, writer and supporting cast of villains named Thrudwang and Sabre (in ampules). **Unknown Soldier** is merely going bi-monthly while **PLOP!** moves into the 50-cent Giant category with separated covers and innumerable gags and sketches.

By way of balancing **Weird Western's** cancellation, **House of Secrets** is being restored on the DC schedule. Other books on the National horizon are the previously announced Kanigher-created **Ragman**, and a new Kanigher concept, **The Sextet**.

Composed of six women's lobbers who have been denied

dc unveils kanigher's new sextet

work on the space program by male chauvinists, **The Sextet** is a Blackhawk like coalition for female equality. Before they're through, The Sextet will have money and hardware and a secret base (probably constructed by elves, the most "secret" bases, drawn by the Redondo shop.

Success breeds success, so naturally when the sales figures for Kanigher and Estrada's **Ballistic** indicated a measure of success, another Sanchez-view war documentary went into

NEWS/VIEWS/REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF COMICS

production. This time the tales will revolve about the Nazi tank corps, under the title **Panzer**. Kubert will edit **Panzer** along with **Blitzkrieg** and **Sgt. Rock**, and while Kanigher is to be the writer a new artist will be seen in the presence of Golden Ager Lee Elias (Black Cat, Beyond Mars, Tommy Tomorrow). Elias has been in England for a while, and Kubert took special pains to get him for **Panzer**, so that he can give the strip his own brand of realism.

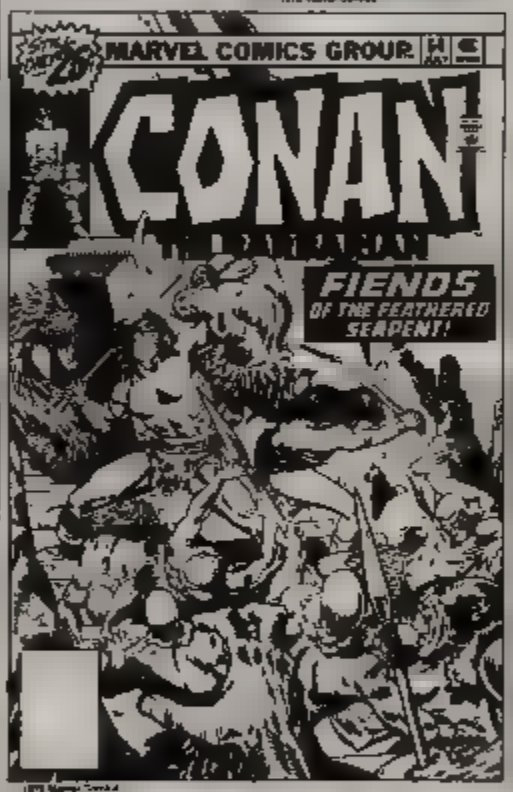
DC Special 22 will feature the appearance of *The Three Musketeers*, as presented by Denny O'Neil and George Moliterni. The Musketeers will get a six-page layout which presently plans and their backup series will be reprints of *Robin Hood*.

In the dollar-sized Collector's Editions, the Bicentennial will be celebrated with tales culled from the pages of Tomahawk. DC's only real source for historical reprints. Curiously due to his high recognition value, Superman will introduce each tale in this book which should be out in May.

Accompanying the **Bicentennial Special** will be a **Justice League of America** giant which is tentatively scheduled to reprint the two-part Superman vs Flash race by Jim Shooter and Curt Swan. And as soon as **King Arthur** returns from the Philippines, it will be scheduled for July or September release.

Among the Famous Firsts series, only two books of real importance remain to be reprinted. **Superman 1** will probably see light in the year ahead, but due to a legal technicality and an unnecessary incident, **Captain Marvel Adventures 1** could be delayed indefinitely. Marvel currently owns the title **Captain Marvel**, and have been keeping DC from using it on the cover of their Shazam! book. Marvel, in turn, was planning to initiate a series called **Return of the Gods**, when in a sudden capricious move, DC rushed out *The Return of the New Gods* in their last **First Issue Special**, pressuring Marvel to change their series title to **The Eternals**. Marvel didn't have to change their book, but didn't want to be even inadvertently confused with the inferior DC production. National, on the other hand, is dependent on Marvel for permission to run **Captain Marvel Adventures 1** under its own title. Hopefully the new regime of Sol Harrison will be able to resolve the matter without any more silly games.

The Justice League of America and the Justice Society of America are moving steadily towards their annual meeting in a three-issue JLA series that guest-stars a double handful of Golden Age Fawcett heroes and villains. Plotted and coordinated by Nelson Bridwell and scripted by Marty Pasko, the overcrowded mini-series will start off with Superman, Wonder Woman of



Earth 1, Green Arrow and Spy master in a new gyrosuph agents (bad guy The Penguin guest starring Cleo of Atlantis. Part 2 will feature Batman and Robin of Earth 1, and Mr. Scarlet and Pinky battling The Joker and The Weeper. Also in that book, Hawkman and Hawkgirl join Superman and Batgirl to take on Dr. Light and The Shade. Book 3 will be the piece de resistance, with both Flashes and both Green Lanterns meeting Mercury and kids and the three Marvels. The trick of the whole matter is that King Kull the Destroyer has taken over the Rock of Eternity and refuses to let the Marvels change from their Billy Batson and Freddy alter-egos. Johnny Thunderbolt guest stars and plays an important part in the tale's resolution.

The big news at Marvel is that Gerry Conway is taking over the position of Marvel Comics Editor in Chief after leaving his position there less than 2 months ago.

When consulted about the affair, Roy Thomas and present Editor in Chief Marv Wolfman stated that, due to too much work and too little writing, Marv had asked Roy if he would be willing to take over again. Roy said that he would consider the matter under certain conditions, and Wolfman went on an English vacation to ponder the situation.

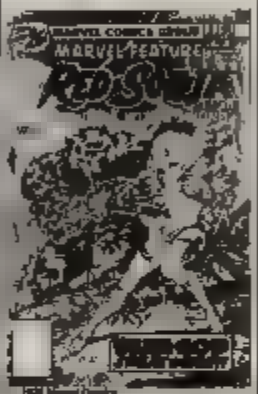
"I found that all the editing was taking time from my writing," said Wolfman. "and I'm more concerned with being a good writer. So upon returning, Stan, Roy and Marv thrashed out a deal which left Wolfman six books a month to write and edit, while Roy was to assume over-all control of Marvel Comics and write **Conan**.

"I didn't really miss the work and all the job, and wasn't too interested in taking over again," explained Roy "but did miss the control used to have, especially when things appeared that I didn't like."

After a brief week's vacation in California, Roy was expected to sign a new two or three year contract in early March. The vacation proved to be more enjoyable than anticipated however and the result was that Roy decided to move to the Los Angeles area within the next few months.

"I resented the change, explained Roy. "I found myself thinking more and more about the climate, getting away from New York and the hassles. And there are more possibilities for doing new and different types of writing, like TV and films. So I called Marvel and asked them to notify Stan that I was just coming back to tell them I wasn't coming back at least not as Editor-in-Chief. For right now I'll get some sort of extension on my present contract and move to a place just outside Hollywood by June or July at the latest."

This decision left Stan in a difficult position with no one to take overal charge of Marvel Comics. Roy suggested Conway for the vacant position, and shunned use some examples of Gerry's Marvel-like work for National. "He can do this kind of work at DC or he can do it here" was Roy's basic argument. "And if Gerry comes back to Marvel, we'd have virtually every top writer in comics."



A subsequent meeting between Stan and Gerry went well, and after preliminary contract discussions Conway submitted his resignation to DC and began working at Marvel on March 8. Exact details of the terms were still unsettled at this writing, except that the 23-year old writer/editor will become Executive Editor (he likes the

conway chosen next exec ed of marvel

'Executive' title) and that Len Wein will continue handling **Spider-Man**, with a new Conway-scripted companion Spider-Man title a possibility.

Changes of some sort are certainly forthcoming, but the patriarchal structure of Marvel will probably be more fragmented now since Roy, Kirby, Wein, Wolfman, Goodwin and Conway are all fully contracted editors. Gerry will no doubt oversee everyone's collective efforts, while Stan watches over Conway

wein finds fortune in marvel premier

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From out of the past comes the bizarre exploits of the 1940's underground heroine, **The Adventures of Sweet Gwendoline.** The book features four cartoon adventure serials that read like *X-rated* versions of the *Perils of Pauline*, replete with a dastardly villain, a mysterious countess, and a secret agent—all of whom do their best to keep Gwen under wraps, be they leather, rubber, rope or chain—while artist John Willie did his best to save her. 140 pages, 16 in color, $12.95 plus .50 postage. You MUST be 18 to order.

LAST CHANCE TO GRAB THE PAPER GIRLS

In response to the interest generated by our special pin-up issue (**MEDIASCENE 8**), we have acquired a small number of copies of the French book, **Les Filles De Papier** (*The Paper Girls*). This 150-page volume contains a wealth of sensational art, illustrating the captivating beauty of the girls of the comics. American, European and underground artists are all represented in this hard to find item, with 32 pages in full, fleshy color. We only have a few of these scorchers, available now for only $5.00 plus .50 postage and handling. For readers 18 or over, please!

COMIXSCENE

three or four times a year too many. Sales regularly go up for comics during the summer leisure months, and a monthly output to take advantage of this is acceptable for most titles. For some reason, the people who control scheduling can't accept this summer sales theory, and push for year-round monthlies that will almost certainly lose money in the winter slump. Then, when the year's report comes in, the figures are poor, so books are killed. As summer approaches, sales rise and the cycle starts again, but with higher prices to help recoup last year's loss. This, of course, is not the only reason for comics' current problems, but it is one of the biggest.

Don Glut's Gold Key gleanings are led off by **Tragg & a Death Duel**, in which a tribe of Neanderthal cave men train dinosaurs to be their living tanks. There is, of course, a battle with the Sky Gods, and an additional fight between Lorn and Keera for the attentions of Tragg.

Dagar 15 reflects a slippage in sales by offering a reprint, probably from issue 1, with a new intro and epilog so that the situation won't be too noticeable. Then **Dr. Spektor** takes up with a real witch when his Lakota packs her bags. The Dark Gods interfere however, and the one occultist is soon up to his magic wand in humanoid "morts."

Neal Adams' Continuity Associates has finally delivered the first issues of **Ms Million Dollar Man** and **Emergency!** (only three or four months late), and both they and Charlton hope that an alternating bi-monthly schedule can be maintained. Appearing in both four-color comic and black and white magazine formats, both series feature art by Gray Morrow, Neal Adams, Dick Giordano, Win Mortimer, Jack Sparling, Dick Ayers and the usual Crusty Bunkers.

Adams is also crusading for creators' rights in comics, and his latest cause involves the theft and resale of original Warren artwork. Reportedly stolen years ago, a large quantity of the original art is now in the hands of collectors all over the country. Adams would like to

recover or locate the missing pages, and is asking all current possessors to contact him.

The second issue of **Fiction Illustrated** has been released from Byron Preiss and Pyramid Books, and features the cosmic journey of **Starfawn**. A derivative of **Star Trek**, this book is about the peaceful exploration of space by a non-military investigation team on an enormous spaceship. Byron Preiss is writing *Starfawn*, which is drawn by Steve Fabian and colored by Marie Severin.

Third of the series is Steranko's *Chandler*, the details of which are revealed in this issue of **MEDIASCENE**. This is a realistic evocation of the 30's private eye that's not to be missed.

And don't forget the **Marvel Comics Convention** on April 23, 24 and 25. John Buscema and Roy Thomas will be giving lessons on how to draw and write, and all the bullpen will be in attendance. Last year's plans are bigger and better, with a large film show and plenty of panels with the artists and writers who help make Marvel mighty!

A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT THE COMIC SCENE BY BRUCE DICKSON

THOUGHT BALLOONS

WHAT ARE THE COMICS SELLING?

Just what are comics selling? We buy them because we like them, but why do we like them? For a moment, let's look at this as objectively as we can. We'll take for granted the limitations comics are heir to, and without being critical, try to collect relevant information.

A good place to start from is to examine what comics are NOT selling. In the last 5 years there has been a fantastic turnover of titles. Perhaps 150 characters and groups have had a #1 issue or a tryout preview. Of those, maybe 20 survived to see their 10th issue. Not long ago we saw the cancellation of **Sherlock Holmes** (DC), **The Shadow**, **Phantom Stranger**, **Young Romance** (#208!), the **21 Dracula Lives**, the Kirby **Omac**, the 50 cent color line, and a whole raft of horror comics. What's goin' on here? This action indicates to me that comics are NOT primarily selling on the strength of characters. If they were, well established characters from other media like Sherlock Holmes and The Shadow would still be strong selling comics.

We could also say that comics are NOT selling art for art's sake. If they were, the beautiful artwork of Kirby, Adams and Corben alone would insure good sales. Kirby's DC books, Adams' Deadman and **Green Lantern-Green Arrow**, and Corben's underground comic, **Rawl** would all have sold better. Another indication telling us that great artwork is not too important in comics is the low rates paid for artwork. This goes for great scripts also. If great work did sell more comics the rates would be higher to encourage it.

Comics are definitely not selling progressive intellectual comments on society. Note the GI—GI flop. Comics are often used within journalism but journalism in comics so far has been deadly. The public is not interested in 25 cent color comics that bridge the gap between mass media and a mature artform.

Well, what ARE comics selling? Let's see . . . they're selling a comodity . . . they're cheap to buy . . . you can buy 4 of the things for $1 . . . they're cheap to throw away. Comics must fill certain minor needs. When the need is satisfied, the comics are thrown out. They are selling something that's mass produced. Hundreds of thousands of copies of each title, enough to fill your entire kitchen, living room, dining room, bedroom floor to ceiling, are printed every month. We know two copies of the same title look alike and we are aware that different heroes from the same company look alike, or at least share a strong family resemblance. This indicates that whatever it is comics sell can be really commercialized. The energy can be transmitted through other media. Spiderman is available in 3 or 4 comics at a time, and also in toys, television and in vitamins.

We already know that whatever it is comics sell is consumed by people whose average age is between 8 and 15 years old.

What is it comics sell? They seem to be a window to a part of the imagination inside all of us. It's a space or a level we can all relate to in our daydreams where we allow adventures and stories to take place without questioning their reality or maturity. Do you really want to fly like Superman, or run like Flash, or throw a hammer like Thor? Of course you do. We all do deep down. Our mind knows we are not able to, but our bodies and emotions would sure like to. Through comics we have a personal mythology where we can play the part of each god and goddess. Accepting these wishes and fulfilling them, if only in dreams, is a very important satisfaction. I believe people read comics mainly to be active on this level inside them.

Let's call this the "level of imagination for comics." All comics relate to somewhere in that level. That's what comics sell.

What's the difference between how comics can present this level and how movies, novels or TV present it? Aren't they all the same? That's the same as asking the difference between Superman on TV, Superman in text, Superman in movies and Superman comics. What is unique about comics is that they can show Superman in any conceivable action we would care to see. Text stories can only tell us about it. Movie and TV production crews are largely bound by the limitations of physical reality and what their money can buy. Superman cartoons are not much of an advance over the comic version and are extremely expensive to make.

Imagine this. The economic scene becomes so bad with the color comics that all the artists have to be fired except one. All the writers have to stay to write all the different kinds of stories, but only one artist can be kept on. Who would you pick? Wouldn't you pick Jack Kirby?

There's a lot of agreement that Kirby draws comics as the vast majority of readers think they should be, better than any other single artist. That's what I'd like to call depicting the imaginative level for comics. The emphasis here is not on Kirby the hero, but the accuracy of his artwork in reflecting a level inside us.

Most Mexikin, Lou Fine, Reed Crandall, Dick Sprang and others in the 40's tuned into this level in us just as will. Kirby has drawn every subject which comics cover including love, comedy, and westerns. They are all acceptable to us largely because the simple emotions of friendship, anger, fear, greed, and pleasure that we hope to see in the stories are so clearly visible in the faces of his characters.

Is there a particular quality in Kirby's work that allows us to tune in so strongly to this imaginative level inside us? Basically, it seems to be his art is stripped of all refinements of technique. It's broadly drawn in simple arrangements of volumetric solids. This communicates form and depth dramatically. What else do the color comics need? Anything they've wanted to show us can be shown with those tools. They seem to be the ideal tools to picture the adventures of gods and goddesses. Accurate anatomy and detailed inking technique are strictly gravy.

To put it another way, Kirby does what comics can do best.

That's what comics sell.

In my opinion, this is the main thing comics have been selling since the beginning of all-in-color-for-a-dime.

Let's wind up by bringing the war, horror, romance and funny animal books more into focus. Within the broad outline of the imaginative level of comics, there are subdivisions that relate to what people want to see comics picture with each of these genres. Just off the top of my head, I'd say that Harvey Kurtzman's war comics at EC are the archetypes for all war comics, the EC science fiction comics defined all science fiction comics up until about 1970. This is ready to change. Carl Barks' Uncle Scrooge and Donald Duck are the classic funny animal comics for all time. And the Dell artists and writers of the 1940's did it for westerns. I don't know who did it for romance. Perhaps those of you who know more about these fields can tell us what the classics of these fields are better than I.

Understanding what comics are doing in this way has been the most valuable way I've found so far. Perhaps it can help you too.

Bruce Dickson

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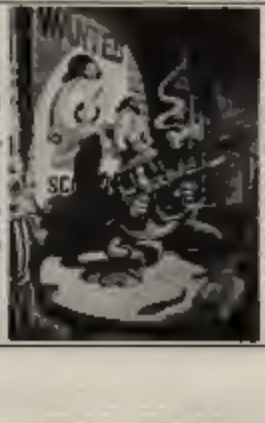

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